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A CHAPLET OF LOVE POEMS

A
CHAPLET OF LOVE
POEMS

BY

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(MRS. ARTHUR HARTER)

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CONTENTS.

Dedication: p. 1.
To my Portrait: p. 2.
The Women of Britain: p. 4.
The Faithful Heart: p. 6.
Obsession: p. 7.
Since then: p. 8.
If it is Love . . .?: p. 8.
One of these Days: p. 9.
Home: p. 10.
Invocation: p. 12.
Lent Love: p. 13.
Now you are mine: p. 14.
The Phantom Lover: p. 15.
The Modern Lover: p. 16.
All Souls' Day: p. 18.
My Star: p. 19.
The Mountains: p. 20.
A Disclaimer: p. 21.
Fidelity: p. 23.
Give me thy Love: p. 23.
In a Pine-Wood: p. 24.
Engadine Carnations: p. 26.
Distrust: p. 27.
Unrequited: p. 27.

Translations:
Purity: p. 29.
The Dead Kiss: p. 29.

Translations:
Presentiment: p. 30.
Gifts: p. 31.
If I were God: p. 32.
The Cross: p. 33.
Irrevocable: p. 34.
An Angel's Serenade: p. 34.
An Angel's Serenade—The Answer: p. 35.
Farewell: p. 36.
Rimes tendres: p. 37.
"Tendresses": p. 38.
The Dead Child: p. 38.

My Heart that slept: p. 40.
Enduring Love: p. 41.
"The right that is mine I forego": p. 42.
You'll love me yet: p. 42.
Secrets: p. 43.
"What care I if I lose the world?": p. 44.
Beyond Recall: p. 45.
In Distant Days: p. 47.
I wish that you were dead: p. 47.
If you would love me: p. 48.
Springtime: p. 49.
Playing with Fire: p. 50.
Alas: p. 51.
Come near: p. 52.
I will repay thee all: p. 53.
Fulfilment: p. 53.

Autumn; at Kew: p. 55.
Heart's Blossom: p. 56.
The Wind: p. 57.

Childhood:

I. "They tell me, Sweet, I love you overmuch": p. 59.
II. "Plying her oars, my Little One": p. 60.
III. "My child has eyes like some sweet summer night": p. 61.
IV. "Six years I held my darling in my arms": p. 63.
V. "When I was ill and lay in bed": p. 64.
VI. "'Come to me, my little Godchild'": p. 65.
VII. "I remember how I quarrelled": p. 65.
VIII. "In a lane beyond the village": p. 67.
IX. "A message for mother?—": p. 68.
X. The Portrait of a Child: p. 69.

The Empty Nests: p. 72.
Child of my Child: p. 74.
The Hand of Time: p. 75.

Regrets:

I. "What is the good of it": p. 77.
II. "I would disclaim that we had loved": p. 78.
III. "I wish I knew how I can bear it": p. 78.
IV. "I love you not, and you": p. 79.
V. "My heart is full of love for you": p. 80.
VI. "I will not think of you by night and day": p. 81.

Disillusion: p. 83.
We are parted: p. 84.
A Trust: p. 86.
Love's Surrender: p. 88.
"What is there left for us to say?": p. 89.
A Defence: p. 91.
A Dream: p. 94.
Yester-Year: p. 95.
Life's Changes: p. 96.
Unexpressed: p. 98.
In the Rainy Weather: p. 100.
Protest: p. 101.
Remembered: p. 104.
Mater Consolatrix: p. 106.
Valediction: p. 107.
An Answer: p. 111.
"I know not, do you love me still": p. 111.
Love's Shipwreck: p. 112.
Spring: p. 113.
Renunciation: p. 114.
Vindication: p. 117.

Early Poems:

Clouds: p. 120.
Our Longings: p. 122.
An Apology for Flirtation: p. 124.
Remember: p. 125.
Ichabod: p. 127.
A Remonstrance: p. 128.

An Autumn Meeting: p. 130.
A Woman's Wisdom: p. 131.
Resurgam: p. 133.
After Three Years: p. 134.
Life and Death: p. 136.
Benedictus: p. 137.
Fidelis: p. 139.
Parting: p. 141.
Heaven or Hell: p. 142.
A Buried Thought: p. 143.
Aftertime: p. 147.
An Altered Heart: p. 149.
In the Crowd: p. 150.
A Retrospect: p. 153.
After Long Years: p. 155.
Love Tokens: p. 156.
Resignation: p. 157.
One Word: p. 159.
Voglia's Return: p. 160.
Angel's Wings: p. 162.
A Question: p. 163.
When: p. 164.
Meditation: p. 165.
Her Grave: p. 167.
Oblivion: p. 168.
Another Dream dispelled: p. 169.

DEDICATION.

YOU are to my heart love's incarnate beginning
The realized hope of the dream of my youth;
The zest of my life, whether virtue or sinning,
To hold, till I die, my ideal of truth.

* * * * *

These printed words are poor indeed
Now written here for all to read,
But there are thoughts between the lines
Through whose dim imagery shines
The sweet and tender things I meant,
But could not utter their extent;
Voiceless, where most I tried to speak
The very love that sounds so weak,
Whose potent sway I understood,
But could not render as I would.
I lay them humbly at thy feet,
Proud if thou do but read them, Sweet,
Obscure, imperfect, though they be,
They carry all my soul to thee!

TO MY PORTRAIT.

HERE is a picture that was done
Long years ago of me.
I found it only yesterday,
And kept for you to see.

What do you think of this young face
That looks across the years
Into my eyes, that gaze to-day,
Half-blinded with my tears,

At that bright image of myself,
That knew no breath of care,
Whose inward happiness smiles forth
Buoyant and debonair.

There is a world of confidence
In those expectant eyes,
That seem to dream that life is full
Of hope that never dies.

About that mouth the smile is set
Eager to do and dare,
The steadfast brow gleams thoughtfully
From out the sunny hair.

No sign is there to prophesy
What fortune has in store
For that glad child who stands and knocks
At Fate's mysterious door.

No veil is raised in charity
To show the coming years;
No note of warning sounds to spare
The future's blinding tears.

Buoyant with hope she makes her start
Along life's flower-strewn way;
She does not see the storm-clouds ranged
In ruinous array.

Poor little face that smiles so bright
And finds the world so fair!
Poor trusting eyes, that wept such tears
When joy had turned to care!

I wonder which I pity most,
—Now all is done and said,—
The girlish face so full of life,
Whose ruined hopes fell dead;

Or this changed face that gazes back
To-day across the past,
And mourns her vanished happiness
While tears fall thick and fast.

THE WOMEN OF BRITAIN.[1]

A WORD for the women of Britain
Who bid their belovèd "Good-bye";
The husbands, the brothers, the sons, who go forth
To fight, and to conquer, or die.
A word for the women of Britain
Who part with the friend they love best,
And fighting their fears, smile up through their tears
When he too goes out with the rest.

'Tis hard for the women of Britain,
Who stay when their warriors go,
The men who set forth are eager and mad
To measure their might with the foe.
For the men there 's the passion of peril
That lightens the hardship they bear,
For what can't they stand with a comrade at hand,
The death or the honour to share?

[1] This poem was written and published in January, 1900, during the war in South Africa, and the proceeds of the sale, amounting to upwards of £400, were devoted to the War Funds.

Recitations of the poem were given all over England, in America, and in South Africa; in England Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Mrs. Brown Potter, Mrs. Charles Sugden and several others recited it for various charities connected with the War; in America it was recited by Mrs. Langtry; and in South Africa by Lord Rosslyn.

Free copies were sent for distribution amongst the sick and wounded soldiers on the hospital ship "Maine," and to other hospitals and camps in South Africa.

For them there 's the strain of the battle,
And the joy of the charge at its height,
The cry of the clan, the shout of the man,
And the fury and throb of the fight;
In the clamour and clash of encounter
There is valour and glory—or death?
With the thought of the woman who loves them
To hallow their last dying breath.

But what for the women of Britain?
Ah! *they* need our pity the most!
In their desolate homes they are waiting for news
Of the dear one who dies at his post.
For theirs is the weariest trial,
Long vigils of pain day and night;
Sick at heart and alone, they pray at God's Throne
For the men whom they love in the fight.

And this is the word for the women
Whose loved ones are far, far away,
That the work to be done for those who remain
None else can accomplish but they;
And this is the work of the women,—
Brave women of generous soul,—
To take each her share of the sorrow they bear
And lighten the grief of the whole.

The gentle are helping the simple,—
Love and sympathy level all pride,—

And hearts find relief in the union of grief,
When the men fight and die side by side:
All the women of Britain are equal,
For the men share alike in the fray,
And the rich and the poor are just sisters
In the hearts of the nation to-day.

(*Set to music by Geraldine Edge-Munns.*)

THE FAITHFUL HEART.

THEY tell me he is light of faith,
And whispers love in every ear,
And robs me of those words and smiles
That only I should know and hear;
What care I for such poor pretence
When he gives me love's affluence?
I know! . . . I know! . . .

The light o' loves he trifles with
Are nothing to his heart of heart,
Where love of me inviolate
Has always dwelt a thing apart.
How can such women count with me?
We laugh about them, I and he!
I know! . . . I know! . . .

For when life's troubles on him press,
And other friends grow cold and weak,

He knows a faithful heart is there,
Which is not far for him to seek;
For I am waiting close at hand
To counsel, love, and understand.
He knows! . . . He knows! . . .

OBSESSION.

EVEN suppose that you should forget me,
Part from me coldly and never regret me,
Break all your vows and leave me alone,
Turn to another and make her your own,—
Even suppose! But could that unmake me,
Yours and yours only, although you forsake me,
The woman you loved through life's happiest years,
When we shared our ideals, our passions, our fears?

Even suppose that you should reject me,
From the best of your life you could never eject me,
For memory often would haunt you to pain,
And thrill you with dreams of the old love again.
Even suppose! Could I ever reproach you, . . .
Allow the least shadow of blame to approach you?
Ah no! Though forsaken, alone, and apart,
I should still hold you fast in the depths of my heart.

SINCE THEN.

YOU took me for your own long since,—
Not mine, but yours, the choice,—
You altered all the world for me
And filled it with your voice.

Since then my life is not my own,
But passed from my control;
Merged into yours and lost in you
Are life, and heart, and soul.

Since then whate'er you willed of me
I am,—for you to take;
And gifts or traits you love of mine
I cherish for your sake.

Since then the woman that I am,—
Or good, or bad,—or both,—
Is dedicated all to you
In heart, and soul, and troth.

IF IT IS LOVE . . . ?

YOUR soul has answered to my soul,
Your kiss my lips has thrilled;
Together we have drained the cup
Of heart's desire fulfilled;

And mind has clung to mind till speech
Revealed the thought of each:
We two were one.

The best of you was shown to me,
The best of me to you;
If it is love when soul and heart
Merge in the other's counterpart,
When each one shares the fate of years,
And both have seen the other's tears . . .
Then we have loved.

(*Set to music by Isidore de Lara.*)

ONE OF THESE DAYS.

ONE of these days there may come to fulfilment,
Out of the wreck of some dreams that are dead,
The hope of my life in a tardy atonement
For long years of waiting and bitter tears shed;
The future shall crown what the present denies,
A mystical harvest the soul's sight descries,
The veil shall be lifted and all things made clear,
And out of the darkness life's truths shall appear,
One of these days.

One of these days, beyond all peradventure,
In the fullness of time my dear one may be

Mine and mine only, all interludes past,
A faithful true lover to me.
The heart chooses once, and this knowledge must soften
The pang that divines that the flesh chooses often,
And can I not wait, with his heart all my own,
Serene till the time when such wild oats are sown,
One of these days?

One of these days things may come to fulfilment,
The work I have toiled to complete may be done,
The peace I have longed for at last may be won,
And the goal I desire may come into my sight:
Out of the whirlwind of painful endeavour,
Of hopes unrequited, of interests that sever,
Shall I find an oasis of beauty and rest,
In a world of my own with the one I love best,
One of these days?

HOME.

A WILD night's skies are full of stars,
The meadows drenched with rain;
I drive along the country lane,
Alert, with eyes that pierce the dark
And long for home again.

The outlines of the trees drift by,
  Black shapes against the sky;
And pungent smells of burning weeds
  Floating across the distant meads,
    Blow fresh upon my face.

I tell myself how it will be
  When home is coming near;
We pass the gate, and then I see
  The ivied cottage door appear,
    Set wide to welcome me.

The misty moon's track lights the path,
  Above the wet trees meet,
The garden with its aftermath
  Smells dim and perfumed at my feet,
    And here is home at last!

How like the haven of my dreams
  This little cottage seems!
So dark without, so bright within,
  My heart sings as I enter in;
    This is the home I love!

INVOCATION.

I DO not merely love those lips of thine
Because their kisses richer far than wine
Set all my pulses beating and afire,
Enamoured by the force of thy desire;
I love thy mouth for all its tender words,
The sweetness and the wisdom of its speech;
I ponder on those heart-remembered things
When thou art far away beyond my reach.

I do not merely love those eyes of thine
Because their glance meets mine across the crowd,
And feeds my hungry soul with perfect love,
From heart to heart in one deep look avowed.
I love them, too, when they are dim with tears,
And I may soothe and comfort them in grief,
When in their depths the struggling soul appears
That turns to love for solace and belief.

I do not merely love those hands of thine,
Whose warm close clasp thrills through my every vein,
Because their passionate and tender touch
Sets all my senses tingling and aflame;
I love them for their strength, the noble worth
And confidence their earnest grasp assure,
And for their serious work and steadfastness,
Their patience, and their courage to endure.

I do not merely love thy love of me
Because it brightens all my world, and sets
My life to music sonorous and sweet,
Enriched with those fair hopes that love begets;
I love it too for all it glorifies,
For through love's eyes are seen the truths of life,
The lesson taught of wider sympathies,
The broader view, the triumph over strife.

So all my life is coloured with thy love,
And yielded proudly to thy dear control,
As all I am subjective to thee springs,
The best and worst,—Love's passion and Love's Soul.
How could I live without thy Love and Thee?
Life would be death, and hope despair would be.
So do I fall before thy feet and pray:
"Take not from me thy precious love away!"

LENT LOVE.

I DID not ask thee for a faithful heart,
Nor yet for constancy to last all time;
I merely said, "Until we two must part
Lend me thy love and I will lend thee mine."

I did not think how hard to part would be,
I did not know how great the love would grow;

I only saw with eyes that could not see,
And did not dream that I should love thee so.

I do not grieve with any vague regret,
Nor long to change one hour of joy we spent;
But now the end has come I would forget
Thee, and that time and all the love we *lent*.

Alas, how could I tell this would befall,
When seas and distance lay 'twixt thee and me?
In vain I strive the Lent Love to recall,
My heart and love remain,—my gift,—with thee.

NOW YOU ARE MINE.

NOW you are mine, what is there left to pray
Of the high Gods, since you and love combine
To make this earth a paradise for me,
Turning life's sordid cares to joys divine,
Now you are mine.

Now you are mine, and Love sings in my heart
A rhapsody perennially sublime,
I count the Past a Sleep, from which I wake
To find in your dear eyes Love's Godhead shine,
Now you are mine.

Now you are mine e'en Fate may do her worst.
I do disclaim all fear, save that, in fine,
Of losing you (long-loved, and hardly-won
By patient vigils kneeling at Love's shrine);
Now you are mine!

THE PHANTOM LOVER.

I DREAM sometimes a familiar dream
Of a phantom perfect lover,
Who claims me his when the day is done,
And we madly love each other.

He seems the same,—yet never the same,—
And his face I have seen it never;
But he loves and understands me well,
And swears to be true for ever.

He understands each separate thought
That my heart's depths can discover;
He brings me comfort and sympathy,
—The signs of a perfect lover.

Yet the man I love in my waking hours
Is a selfish man of pleasure;
He is not perfect, yet loves me well
At times in his hours of leisure!

I wake; and hate the familiar dream
And the phantom perfect lover,
Because I love a commonplace man,
And prefer him to all other!

THE MODERN LOVER.

DEAR one, should I love you more
If you understood me?
You whom I have learnt to know
Since the day not long ago
When you came and wooed me!

In your heart I hold a place
Where you store your treasure;
And when other pleasures fail
—Sport or game of no avail,—
Then I claim your leisure!

I am just your holiday,
—You, my heart's existence,—
I must be complacent still
Be your conduct good or ill,
Never dream resistance!

That I have a yearning soul
  Is a tedious matter,
Nothing but a merry wit
Suits your lightsome taste a bit,
  And you *love* gay chatter!

For the rest I sometimes think
  (I, who so adore you,)
You might love me very much
Were our natures more in touch,
  And I fear I bore you!

Love to you is just a game,
  You exact so little!
Be a woman bright and fair,
For the rest you do not care,
  Not one jot or tittle!

I must cease to love so much,
  For it 's not the fashion.
How my sentiments must bore
One who sets so little store
  On the tender passion!

We are contrasts, you and I,
  Singularly mated;
Like to like would never do;
You suit me and I suit you,
  Oddly as it 's fated.

Dear one, should I love you more
If you understood me?
Such a change were strange to see!
Just as well let things still be
As when first you wooed me!

ALL SOULS' DAY.

THERE is a temple in my heart,
A sacred place I hold apart;
Sweet music fills the fragrant air
And flowers are fragrant everywhere,
Where rests the memory of One
Whose patient task on earth is done,—
The home of my belovèd Dead.

In that dim temple of my dead
Are all my inmost longings said;
There amidst music and fair flowers
I kneel and weep and pray for hours,
And wonder if she sees and hears
In her high place my bitter tears
For her;—my heart-remembered Dead?

To that sad Temple of my love
I know her spirit from above

Descends to me divinely kind,
Consoling both my heart and mind.
Ah! she who climbed the heavenly hill,
She knows how much I love her still.
Love cannot die, belovèd Dead!—

MY STAR.

I WORSHIP a star in the heavens,
—A remote and beautiful prize,—
Beyond range of man's power of reaching,
Serene in the limitless skies.

I prayed with impotent passion,
And implored with anguish and tears,
That my star might come down to my pleading,
Or that I might ascend to the spheres.

But, alas, she was cold and unbending,
And my prayer was uttered in vain.
My star in the limitless heavens,
That I never, never shall gain!

No longer the earth and its pleasures
Allure me. My heart is afar;
Where high in despairing remoteness
I worship my pitiless star.

THE MOUNTAINS.

SINCE last night upon the mountains,—
The dear mountains that I love,—
Freshly fallen snow is lying
On the topmost peaks above;
And the soft gray mists are stealing
Like pale ghosts along the slopes,
Through which fitful shafts of sunshine
Struggle forth like human hopes.

Till the strange reflections colour
Snow and mist and verdant vales
With a weird translucent grandeur,
And the purple distance pales.
Then the storm-clouds roll up swiftly
Mass on mass, and drowning rain
Devastates the summer landscape,
Beating down the fields of grain.

Till across the inky darkness
Lurid lightning streaks appear,
While the distant muttered thunder
Makes the cattle low with fear.
Suddenly a rushing storm-wind
Wildly tosses all the trees,
And the whirling of their branches
Sounds like waves of sighing seas.

* * * *

But the storm is quite forgotten
In the morning's radiant light;
Only on the stately mountains
Snow is lying,—gleaming white.

A DISCLAIMER.

JUST for a moment's space the other day,
As we two stood and spoke of trivial things,
There came into your keen and searching eyes
A softer look that in my memory clings;
A gesture, too, half conscious, soon recalled
The impulse an unguarded moment brings.

Some words you spoke . . . and then time's hour-glass turned,
And I was gone. But with me as I went
I took your look and pondered on it long.
It was so fleeting, hardly was it meant;
And yet somehow I thought it boded more
Than a mere look of meaningless intent.

But you, then, doubtless, after I was gone,
Reflecting safely on the moment's chance,
Resolved to be more wise another time,
Nor let the idle ardour of a glance
Enchain a liberty, or forge a link,
Or turn mere fancy into passion's trance.

Was this your thought? Was this the reason why
You hold aloof? . . . How can I make you see
I want no gift but what is freely given?
I ask no more of you, than you of me;
I am no dangerous and no subtle thief,
To seek to undermine the powers that be!

I crave so little from the passing hours,
Which work and circumstance make all too fleet;
A little time for laughter and for love
(Unchained unfettered sympathies are sweet),
A pause sometimes in life's kaleidoscope
When heart responds to heart, and passions meet.

These joys may come, but never must be sought,
And if they come not now, perchance they may
Light up a joyous morrow's luckier chance,
For life brings many a change from day to day,
And happy those who take them as they come,
Nor strive to carve themselves their fateful way.

So now this is a bargain,—you believe
I have no sinister design in view?
You are no more to me than others are;
(And what you might be rests alone with you!)
So, if we meet, we meet as others do
Who have not known the moment that we knew.

FIDELITY.

I LONG have ceased to love you.—Yet I feel
In your mere presence shaken to the soul
With all the torments of uncertainty,
Fearing my heart still held in your control.

To prove I do not love you, I have taught
My lips to frame for you a careless speech;
My eyes can calmly meet your calm regard,
And I have learnt what lessons pride can teach.

All that I can I do, to brave the thrall
In which you captive held my heart and will;
When you are far I dream that I am free,
But when anear I *know* I love you still!

GIVE ME THY LOVE.

GIVE me thy love I do beseech thee!
My days in weariness drag heavily
For lack of that sweet boon thy gift to me.

Costs it so much to grant this longed-for grace,
To make me happy for a little space,
Leaving life hallowed by thy passing trace?

I do not ask the highest or the best,
I only crave to quiet this unrest,
And count myself with thy least love thrice-blest.

And as thou dealest with this heart of mine,
With callous coldness or sympathy divine,
So will I pray high Heaven to deal with thine.

IN A PINE-WOOD.

THE tree-tops meet above my head,
The perfume-laden pines;
Like sentinels they guard the mount
In graceful serried lines.

And in the springing moss I see
Sweet woodland pansies peep,
While purple larkspur, pallid pinks,
And foxgloves star the steep.

Bright shafts of sunshine pierce the shade
And light the lovely scene,
Showing the crimson Alpine fruits,
And curling fern-fronds' sheen.

Here scarlet rowan-berries gleam,
Great daisies, and monk's-hood;
Whilst birds upon a silent wing
Flit through the lonely wood.

The mountains in a noble range,
Clothed in the verdant pines,
Distinct against the bluer sky
Lift up their stately lines.

I move alone; and, dreaming, think
(Whilst misty teardrops start)
Of one who stood beside me here
And held me to his heart.

The woods are full of memories,
And strong upon the breeze
A resinous and pungent scent
Wafts from the tall pine-trees.

And ever in the time to come,
In other scenes and lands,
The scent of pine-woods will recall
The clasp of parting hands.

ENGADINE CARNATIONS.

THE Engadine carnations that you gave me
Are fairer than the hothouse ones we know,
Like delicate and perfumed notes of colour
In Alpine heights luxuriantly they grow.

They tell me that they do not bear transplanting,
And nothing that is done with care and skill
Can make them bloom as here in such profusion,
They hang their fragrance from each cottage sill.

Our love, I think, is like these same carnations,
In Alpine air and woodlands it has bloomed,
And filled our lives with exquisite enchantment;
Transplant it, and perhaps its life is doomed.

For it demands, to keep its zest and beauty,
The Alpine height, the breezy upland air,
The lovely woods, that we have roamed together,
Unfettered by life's trammels or by care.

What shall we do, then, when we leave the mountains
To journey homewards on our severed ways?
How can we bear to part from love's dominion,
And take anew the dull thread of our days?

An end has not yet come to our fair love-land,
A little longer yet we, heart to heart,
May love and dream there is no end, forgetting
How sad the day will be when we must part.

DISTRUST.

I LOVE you, and you doubt me! So distrust
  Will eat away the flower of love I give;
For once its fragrance doubted, die it must.
  Yet love is sweet! Will you not let it live?

Old lovers haunt me in your eyes. Proclaim
  Past presence by vain menace and by boast;
Yet, if I love you, could you not disdain
  A world of loves, so I do love you most?

Yet am I honest. It is true, believe,
  That love and I met once alone before.
Why is the truth so hard, dear, to receive?
  Must you distrust me, still, as heretofore?

UNREQUITED.

I, ALL my life, have waited for this meeting,
  Which leaves you unresponsive to my cry.
You, still unmoved, await love's magic greeting
  In future days. Meanwhile my love must die.

Who, I would know, distorts life's gentle meanings
  Into discordant misery like this?

What hand, rapacious of such cruel gleanings,
Tears from glad hearts their only chance of bliss?

You, hour by hour, grow to my heart still dearer,
Whilst I grow further day by day from you;
You seem so near, yet stars in heaven are nearer,
For all my hopes lie dead between us two.

TRANSLATIONS.

PURITY.

I.

From the Italian of A. Vivanti.

SHE died, poor pale-faced child of want and pain,
Closing her eyes upon a world of tears;
Curses and blows were here her heritage,
And so her pure soul sought the heavenly spheres.

And now adown the starry paths of heaven,
Her weary naked little feet have trod;
Her trembling hands have culled the silver lilies,
That blossom in those spheres,—the stars of God.

And e'en the angels, hushed and reverent,
At sight of such sad pallor midst their bliss,
Incline to her their golden aureoles,
Before those lips that never knew love's kiss!

THE DEAD KISS.

II.

From the Italian of A. Negri.

ONE dismal spring amongst the moss
An early violet raised its head.
The wind was cold;—before it lived
The trembling flower fell dead.

One sultry night upon my lips
A kiss for you awoke and sighed.
You turned away; . . . before it lived
My kiss,—unnoticed,—died.

PRESENTIMENT.

III.

From the Italian of A. Vivanti.

STILL on my lips his bitter kiss I feel;
The chill thereof has sunk into my heart,—
Whilst o'er my senses icy terrors steal,
And in my eyes the blinding teardrops start.
He loves me not!

The smile I summoned to my aid half froze;
Myself I felt how pitiful I seemed.
A surging anger in my soul arose:
"Where is the love," I sighed, "of which I dreamed?
He loves me not."

His love evades me, fugitive like sand
That falls between the fingers that would hold
The fleeting moments with detaining hand.
Yet all in vain! Inexorably cold,
He loves me not.

With both my hands I hide my aching eyes,
To shut away the signs of my despair.
And in my heart Eternal Hope descries
Midst ruined dreams no solace anywhere.
He loves me not!

GIFTS.

IV.

FROM THE GERMAN.

LEAN thy cheek against my cheek
Till thou feelest how it glows
'Neath thy touch for love of thee
As at noon the sun-kissed rose.

Lay thy heart upon my heart,
Till thou hearest how it beats,
In a rapture of endowment,
As a stream the ocean meets.

Lay thy lips upon my lips,
Till thou drinkest all my soul,
Life and heart and strength of me
Yielded up to thy control!

IF I WERE GOD.

v.

After Sully-Prudhomme.

IF I were God the universe were mine!
There should be no one bad, and no one sad,
And no one sick in this sweet world of mine!
The radiant sun should shine forth far and wide
To gladden the eyes and the hearts of men,
And show them beauties beyond their ken,
If I were God!

If I were God the universe were mine!
A god-like gift to lay before thy feet,
Oh my Most Dear, a nuptial gift divine;
Fair with the fragrance of all things sweet,
Bright with the radiance of all things meet,
Thus would I fashion the world for thee,
If I were God!

If I were God the universe were mine
To mould and alter to my heart's desire,
To mar, or make into a work sublime,
Transmuting creation by land and sea.—
But how could I dare to alter *thee*,
If I were God?

If I were God the universe were mine,
But what could I find there worthy of thee?

How could I perfect perfection like thine?
I could but decree that thy love for me,
O my Belovèd, should ever increase;
And rapture like ours should never cease,
If I were God!

THE CROSS.

VI.

From a Tuscan Stornello.

AT the birth of my soul a voice whispered:
"Thou art destined to carry thy Cross."
And weeping I took to my bosom
The emblem of sorrow and loss,
For I learnt that each one, high or low,
Must carry his Cross here below.

Then I saw One who passed on triumphant,
Like a beautiful dream of delight,
And I cried: "To thee only, my Sister,
Are the paths of life flower-strewn and bright?"
—For all answer she led me apart
And showed me the Cross on her heart.

IRREVOCABLE.

VII.

FROM THE ITALIAN.

NAUGHT that the treacherous world will say
Can take you from me, for you are mine.
No calumny it flings can part us,
For Fate accords me the right divine
To claim you mine by the love you give,
To die together as we shall live.

All that I am I give you freely,—
I, that am yours now to make or mar,—
All my soul with its depths of passion,
Youth, and the future that rolls afar.
You are the life and the heart of me,
As I am yours for eternity!

(*Set to music by Mrs. Harding Cox.*)

AN ANGEL'S SERENADE.

VIII.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF PANZACCHI.

AWAKE, and open thy casement, arise!
Behold an angel am I!
Who, for love of thy luminous eyes
Forsaking my heaven on high,
Have fallen to earth for thee.

The smile of God, for thy dear face,
  Child of man, forgetting,
I fell from Paradise to-night,
Those realms of glory and delight
  For thy sake unregretting.

Arise, it is dark, and the cold winds sigh
  And pierce through my folded wings;
Loud through the gloom, around, on high,
  Nature's voices curse and cry
    The story of my sin.
Let me find solace in thy heart,
  Warm me with love terrestrial,
Give me the sorrows mortals know,
Share with me all, for I bestow
  An Angel's love celestial!

AN ANGEL'S SERENADE.

THE ANSWER.

IX.

ENTER! Within these sheltering arms
  No chilling winds shall reach thee.
Beyond compare with heavenly joys
  The rapture I shall teach thee.
    Come near and rest
    Upon my breast,
  Dear Angel! I beseech thee!

FAREWELL.

x.

From "Les Tendresses" of Armand Sylvestre.

I FEEL for you, dear, neither hate nor anger,
I only wish that you had told me true;
How heavy seemed my circling arms, how tiring
My kisses, and my faithful love of you.

I might have known your very soul was weary,
And custom only held you at my side,
That when your head was pillowed on my bosom
There lurked therein some thought you strove to hide.

What cowardice there lies in our illusions!
Why seek to rouse a dead heart by love's spell?
My way is dark, but may yours lie in sunshine.
I see things clear and set you free. Farewell.

I wake from dreams, whilst you are freed from prison.
I cannot count or measure love's brief stay:
Hours to you endless seemed to my heart but moments:
You reckoned years, where I knew but one day.

XI.

FROM THE FRENCH OF ARMAND SYLVESTRE.

I WANT to imprison your heart,
That for ever my own it might seem,—
Your little heart tender and mocking!
I want to imprison your heart
In the casket of gold of my dream.

I want to imprison your days,
So that no one might steal a caress,—
Your days full of light-o'-love's changes!
I want to imprison your days
In the fold of my deep tenderness.

I want to imprison your eyes,
To thus drink, I alone, of their fire,—
Your great eyes so sad yet so joyous!
I want to imprison your eyes
In my lips' long kiss of desire!

"TENDRESSES."

XII.

FROM THE FRENCH OF ARMAND SYLVESTRE.

IS there some flower that must be sought
Where deathly perils most are rife?—
The fairest bloom to seek for thee
I will lay down my very life.

Is there some fruit that none can touch
Save he who dares heart's blood to waste?—
This I will bring thee, an thou wilt,
To offer for thy lips to taste.

Is there some song that none may sing
Save those, like dying swans, near Death?—
This for thy pleasure I will sing
Here at thy feet with my last breath.

THE DEAD CHILD.

XIII.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF A. VIVANTI.

HER wings she folded; so we quite forgot
That she might fly away;
So sweet she smiled on us, so glad her eyes
We hoped the child on earth would stay,
Nor still yearn forth to Paradise.

Angel she seemed; so how could we remember
That all things pass and die?—
A child so tender, clinging to her own,
Who would have dreamt that she would fly,
Spread forth her wings to go alone?

We loved her so! But she, obedient,
Hearing the voice of God
That called her homeward to the distant shore,
Set forth upon the path untrod
And left us evermore!

MY HEART THAT SLEPT.

FOR many years my heart had slept
The dreamless sleep of murdered things,
Peace reigned where once had been wild grief,
And silence spread her quiet wings
Where my heart slept.

A murdered heart,—drenched in life's blood,
Enshrined within a living breast,
None knew my secret, none there were
Who at this death in life had guessed,
Where my heart slept.

And nursing thus my silent heart,
I, in fierce triumph, proudly said:
"Now can none deal me blow or smart.
What heart can suffer that is dead?"
—And my heart slept.

Ah! welladay for fallen pride!
Where is the calm that death begets?
Last night I saw a ghost arise
Whom I had thought beyond regrets,
Where my heart slept.

Healed are the ancient wounds that were,
Risen the dead to life and pain,
Ah! bitter wakening! Cruel Love
To wake to suffering again
My heart that slept!

ENDURING LOVE.

I DO not ask your love. Be only
As kind to me as now you are.
Endure that I may love you wholly
As once a mortal loved a star,
Seen from afar.

I will not plead for more; albeit
I hunger for your merest touch;
I will pour forth no wild repining,
Not to importune you with such,
Told overmuch.

I will be patient and enduring,
That you may learn at last to know
My love is deeper in its meaning,
Than those protesting loud or low,
Who come and go.

I will not ask you to believe me
With only these poor words for sign.
Futurity shall prove unchanging
The deep transcendent strength divine
Of love like mine.

(*Set to music by Madame Nordica.*)

THE right that is mine I forego,
The claim that I hold I resign,
For what can I hold or retain
When your heart and your soul are not mine?

YOU'LL LOVE ME YET.

YOU'LL love me yet! Soon or late
Love must beget
Love. I trust myself and fate
To gain you yet!

You'll love me yet. I swear it,
Say what you will;
And patience, I declare it,
Shall win you still.

You'll love me yet. Believe me,
I can endure
All that you wish in silence,
In trust secure.

You'll love me yet. No matter
How long I wait.
Ah! it is sweet to suffer
For your dear sake!

But, should you love me never,
—Through time and pain,—
I still must love you ever,
Although in vain.

SECRETS.

SECRETS there are that my heart remembers,
Dear secret things that the world knows not,
Like fire that lurks 'neath the cold gray embers,
They dwell in my soul, whom my soul begot.
Sometimes they come in a peaceful moment,
When all is quiet, and life afar,
—Life, with its discord, and brawl and foment,—
Recedes, and leaves me what none can mar:
Thoughts that arise in my spirit's quiet,
Thoughts that none other can dream or know,
Leading me far from the world and its riot,
To the love of my life long ago.

Again I live in the sun-bright weather,
The early morning is fresh and still;
And we two are roaming forth together
Through the cool wood till we climb the hill.
I see the place where we always tarried,
—Deep in the shadow where none could see!—

Never by curious passer harried,
Where I kissed you, dear, and you kissed me.
Then onward again with foot that lingers,
Through the green upland and wooded ways,
Holding your hand in my happy fingers,
Happy and few were those love-lit days!

But one short summer to us was given,
But oh! what a sweet mad love was ours!
With a paradise on earth to live in,
You were my life, and I was yours!
This is the story that none discover,
A hidden chapter I hold apart,
I folded the page and turned it over,
And the secret dies in my own dead heart.
These are the dreams that I dream for ever,
Phantoms of thought that by night and day
Dwell in the soul that forgets them never,
Till Earth and Heaven have passed away.

WHAT care I if I lose the world?
The world is nothing; you are all.
Now that I know your love is mine,
What do I reck what else befall?
Your love is mine! . . .

A year ago! how the wheel does turn!
Conquered to-day and overcome,
Lies at my feet the world I spurn;
But lost the love for which I yearn,
The love once mine.

BEYOND RECALL.

WELL! is it you? Let me look, let me see,
Stand close to the light, I will gaze in your face
And search there for all I remember of old
In those days that are dead, that flew on apace,
When we two were happy and hopeful and bold.
—Let me look, let me see the eyes that I loved,
The lips that I kissed, and the hands I clasped warm;
Are they changed these long years, are they altered
and cold
That once were so piercingly sweet to behold?
Ah me, dear, I miss the old passionate look,
The warmth, the intensity, where is it all?
I once read your face like a favourite book,
But what I see now is beyond my recall.
—And am I changed also? Alas, dear, it seems
I miss in myself the old heart that was yours,
The passionate love that in life and in dreams
Went out to you only, and centred in you.

Is everything altered,—is nothing the same
As once long ago when our hearts were afire?
Ah! where is it hiding, that fine subtle flame
That kindled and blended our love's dear desire?
Is it your fault or mine? Dear, I question in vain.
Can we call back no power from far-distant days
To live for one moment the old life again?
—No matter its folly, no matter its pain,—
To feel for one pulse-throb that you are all mine,
Soul and body all mine, in my arms, on my heart,
Forgetting the present,—the future beyond,—
Life's frail peradventure determined divine
For one moment eternal, ecstatic, sublime.
—In vain do we call on the somnolent past,
In vain do we knock at each other's changed hearts.
A ghost to our summons appears wan and ghast,
The wraith of dead love, of dead hopes past recall.
So pale and pathetic! We yearn on its face,
And hold forth our arms, whilst the blinding tears fall,
We call it by each dear familiar old name,
Entreat it again in our life to remain,
And revive by its presence our moribund hearts.
But alas, regretful, and solemnly mute,
In sadness despairing the vision departs!
—Ah me, dear, how wistfully then, left alone,
We turn to each other our heart-broken gaze,
Our hands fall apart, our kisses dissever,
Beyond our recall are the halcyon days,
And the love that has vanished for ever.

IN DISTANT DAYS.

HOW long is it since once in distant days
You deigned, unbending for a little while,
To woo me for my heart, and court my love,
And hold me captive by your royal smile?
You vowed sweet vows no future days should break,
And deemed the world well lost for my dear sake,
In distant days.

"*Tout casse, tout passe, tout lasse!*" And so, alas,
You wearied slowly of my love and me.
What law is there to bind the heart or will?
So I who love you yet, have set you free.
But, Dear, no future love that dawns for you,
Can ever be as sweet as that we knew
In distant days.

I WISH THAT YOU WERE DEAD.

I WISH that you were dead, for then
The thought of you might die,
And with it all the cruel wrongs
That warp my heart, and cry
Revengefully.

I wish that you were dead, because
The dead we can forgive;
This blinding sense of misery,
Can I forget it whilst you live
Provocative?

I think that were you dead, perhaps
When the years are long between
The wound of your iniquity,
Kind thoughts might intervene;
Such things have been.

Die,—let your death my ransom be
From your accursed control,
Away! and set my spirit free,
And my distracted soul
Render me whole.

IF YOU WOULD LOVE ME.

IF you would love me, I could be
All that you might wish of me,
And all the shadows would depart
That have gathered round my heart;
All the world would altered be
If you would love me.

If you would love me, I could live
Another life from what I lead,
All the old faiths would awake
To hope and trust for your dear sake.
All old griefs would banished be
If you would love me.

If you would love me, hand in hand
Wandering through love's pleasant land
We would pass along life's way,
All past sorrows changed to-day
Into perfect happiness,
If you would love me.

(*Set to music by Paul Rubens.*)

SPRINGTIME.

THE new small leaves are breaking and bursting
In a shower of snow on the blackthorn trees;
And through the brown earth green spears are thrusting
Their trembling blades in the delicate breeze.
A yearning note in the thrushes' singing
Cries piercingly sweet like a human thing;
And all the world seems throbbing and ringing,
Warmed by the passionate breath of the Spring!

For Spring is here, and Winter has vanished,
And the days are turning to light and sun,

The mists and the snows are hiding, banished,
And the air is teeming with life begun.
And even my heart is awake and burning
For something the opening year may bring,
Stirred by a vague and mystical yearning,
Warmed with the passionate breath of the Spring!

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

LAST year it was we swore we would not love,
For both of us, burnt children, dreaded fire;
What love we had to give was spent and dead,
And turned to ashes was our heart's desire.
Not love, we frankly said, for such as we,
Who were so sadly wise in every way;
Not love,—that potent passion and unrest
Of other days, we buried where it lay.

None such for us again, it was agreed,
But a caprice ethereal and free,
A gladsome tenderness as light as air,
And subtle sympathy for you and me!
We chose it all with care precise and frank,
Each gave to each the special cue and part,
And so we settled down to play at love,
Foregone conclusion that we had no heart!

We played our parts so well that each approved
With mocking laughter of the other's wit;
And if some fancy touched our sympathy
It seemed to us, at best, a clever hit.
That was last year; how came the subtle change?
Where is the lightsome laughter and the jest?
And where the careless calm unconsciousness?
Ah, welladay, they have not stood the test.

I love you. It is best avowed, declared,
In spite of all it costs my pride to say
"I love." Ah me, why did I play with fire,
That scorches and consumes my heart to-day?
What's said is solemn. Now the truth is told,
We cannot meet again, Dear, you and I.
For you—you do not love me. It is I
Alone who learn life's secret. So good-bye.

ALAS!

DEAR, you are weary of my love and me.
Do not disclaim what is so very plain,
Nor seek to hide beneath a well-meant lie
The truth, because you wish to spare me pain.
I did not love you when you loved me most,
And this, perhaps, my punishment must be,

That when your heart was mine I did not care,
And now I love you, when you love not me!
I will not hold you by your vows forsworn.
Dear, did you dream that I would stoop to try?
Call back to me a lost allegiance,
A broken faith?—Not I, Dear.—So good-bye!

COME NEAR.

I HUNGER for thee; as the poor unfed
Grow fierce and ravenous for bread,
So crave and hunger I for thy dear eyes,
Come near and feed me with their rich replies.

I thirst for thee, as thirst the fevered lips
Of some poor soul who faints in life's eclipse;
Come near, and lay thy sweetest mouth on mine
And straightway thirst is quenched by love like wine.

I am so cold; around the north winds blow,
And earth is ironbound in ice and snow;
Come near and thaw me, take me to thy heart,
Ice turns to warmth, like summer's counterpart.

I yearn for thee: as yearns the pilgrim Soul
Which struggles on with heaven for its goal,
So do I yearn for thee, and only thee.
Come near and take me, thou art heaven to me!

I WILL REPAY THEE ALL.

"I WILL repay thee all" (thou wrotest), "nay,
Not all, for that at once transcends man's might,
Since thou hast given, as a woman gives,
Thy very soul, and all that in thee lives,
A bounteous wealth, a triumph of delight.
Yet, will I repay thee,
Wait, and thou shalt be
The very heart of me!"

Thou wilt repay me all, thou sayest, yet
Of what avail such promise of largesse,
If now I starve and die of sheer despair,
Before thy hands can lift my load of care,
Or give me back my ruined happiness?
Ah! pay me back thy debt,
Before life's sun is set,
And whilst I love thee yet!

FULFILMENT.

DEAR Love, when we are parted each from each,
I miss you more than any words can say;
I miss your daily presence, daily speech,
And wish you here each hour of every day.

How did I live then when I knew you not?
How lagged the monstrous leaden-footed years
That held my promised love from me?—
Like one in durance vile to whom appears
A radiant Angel opening wide the gate
That leads to freedom, so felt I when fate
In your dear image threw the portals wide
That closed about my narrow loveless life,
Unbarred for me the dismal barriers,
Behind whose gloom my hungry heart and I
Yearned silently, long year upon long year,
For that bright day that might at last appear,
When all suspense would end, and I should gain
This perfect fulfilment to comfort long pain,
In the love of my lover for me.—
Ah, Sweet! you came and took me by the hand,
And led me forth into Love's pleasant land.
You showed me gorgeous sights of sea and shore,
Where all had seemed mere common earth before.
The sun shone forth from my dark firmament,
The glorious sun of Love that warms like fire!
"You are my own!" you cried. "We will not part,
Now I have found you, dear, my life's Desire!"
—And then I knew my sweetest dream fulfilled,
For I could hear Love singing in my heart!

AUTUMN; AT KEW.

DO you remember how we two together
Paced up and down those lovely walks at Kew?
The level sun, that perfect autumn weather,
Streamed through the russet trees a crimson hue.

We wandered down to where the fringing sedges
Move slowly to the rhythm of the lake;
And moorhen darted through the water's edges,
Where tideless waves upon the low shores break.

The black rooks wheeled and circled o'er the river,
Where here and there a late boat glided by;
The passing breeze made all the rushes quiver,
And stirred the falling foliage with a sigh.

And then the monster Winter-house's treasures!
We gazed upon the strange luxuriant trees,
The giant ferns their crumpled fronds uncurling,
Exotic plants their flag-like leaves unfurling,
Come hither from far lands across the seas.

How happened it a little fluttering robin
Flew past, and beat his wings against the glass?
His frightened cry seemed like a creature sobbing;
I saw him turn in circling flight, and pass.

Across the wood a few late birds were calling,
As if to say all summer songs were sung;
And in the splendour of transfiguration
Along the walls the bleeding creepers hung.

We strolled along the less frequented byways,
The woodland nooks, the widening verdant glades,
Till duty called us back to life's dull highways,
And evening threw around her soft gray shades.

Do you remember how we two together
Paced up and down those lovely walks at Kew?
The world seemed all our own that magic weather;
You kissed my lips; ah! all my world was you!

HEART'S BLOSSOM.

MY heart is like a red rose-tree,
Bestarred with countless flowers of love
That freshly bud and bloom for thee
Whom I adore all things above.
And every day I strip my tree
Of every rose that redly blows,
To offer all my wealth to thee,
Till there is left no single rose.

But lo! fresh blossoms bud and break
On that poor tree that I stript bare,
New flowers of love for thy dear sake
Bloom on my heart's-tree everywhere!
So do I love thee more and more,
And every day fresh roses start
In reddest fragrance o'er and o'er,
Upon the rose-tree of my heart!

THE WIND.

THE blustering wind makes desolate
My garden's greenest places;
The leaves all trembling fall, to shun
His boisterous embraces.

Uncouthly fond, he teases now
My gracious summer flowers,
While trembling on their stalks, they feel
The chilling drowning showers.

The children, as they scamper in,
—Bearing the wild wind's traces,—
Bring with them gusts of outer air,
Blown hair, and wet, flushed faces.

A lull comes in the noisy strain,
—Breaks in the cloudy masses,—
A little rift of blue appears,
Through which faint sunshine passes.

And as we fling the windows wide,
Sweet scents of open flowers,
And pungent smells of earth and grass,
Waft from our ruined bowers.

CHILDHOOD.

(TO MY CHILD.)

CHILDHOOD.

I.

THEY tell me, Sweet, I love you overmuch,
More than wise mothers love an only One.
They say you are to me the light of life,
My Star, my midnight Moon, my midday Sun.
What if you are? What if I wrap you round
With just such love? Do I not owe you all
And more than I can do, for being mine,
My very own, whatever else befall?

God gave you life, and gave your life to me,
Dear child, who thus fulfilled my soul's appeal!
How can I love you overmuch who brought
To my lone heart such joy and weal?
What were my life without you? What were I
Without my child to watch, to tend, to rear,
Without her clinging arms about my neck,
Her joys to share, her little griefs to cheer?

A child feels sometimes that the world is cold,
And only mother's love is warm and sure,
Tears must be dried by mother's hand alone,
Ah! heaven-sweet the task these ills to cure!
You fill my life up to the very brim,
And, Child, it was an useless one before.

How can I love you overmuch who bring
To me of all things good a generous store?

You shall be glad if I can make you so.
—Too soon appear the rifts within the lute,
The changing years that turn our gold to dross,
The jangling crash that makes all music mute.
You shall be glad if love can make you so.
My love shall lead you through life's tangled maze,
So in an aftertime my child shall say:
"My mother's love made sweet my childhood's days!"

CHILDHOOD.

II.

PLYING her oars, my Little One
Propels the heavy boat,
I doubt there never was so sweet
A mariner afloat!

She wears a gravely anxious air,
—The child is taking pains,—
As regularly to and fro
Her steady stroke she strains.

Against the sun her silhouette
  Stands out minute and clear,
The eager hands, the bending back,
  The glance that knows no fear.

A little breathless then she turns
  To mother's eyes for praise,
And, smiling, meets a world of love
  In that devoted gaze.

CHILDHOOD.

III.

MY child has eyes like some sweet summer night,
  Vastly, profoundly, celestially blue;
  Starlit with star-thoughts virginally true,
That pierce the deepest dark with faith and light.

My child has eyes like some secluded shrine,
  Accustomed to all holy things and pure;
  Where prayers are offered for poor sinners' cure,
And knees are bent to worship the divine.

My child has eyes like some glad Day of Feast,
Rising superb like the sun in the east;
Full of the clash and the clang of the throng,
Joyous and tender, gentle and strong.

My child has eyes like some soft roseate dawn,
Misty with dreams futurity reveals;
Hushed and expectant, till mysterious steals
The potent presage of the soul newborn.

My child has eyes like some cool healing Hand
That calms all fevers by its subtle powers,
Comforting like silence, fragrant like flowers,
Or a flowing stream in an arid land.

My child has eyes like some eternal Loss
Shadowing life's journey with the fatal Cross,
Pointing out stern duties, and the noblest goal,
Through her sad eyes pouring treasures of her soul.

My child has eyes like some triumphant Cry
That spurs man on to battle and to fight,
That arms him with true courage and proud might
And makes men heroes who will dare and die!

My child has eyes like all fair things that be!
A psalm of praise, a flower, the summer skies,
All that is good shines out from her clear eyes,
As all things pure in her sweet soul must be.

IV.

SIX years I held my darling in my arms
And watched the baby grow into the child.
The delicate and sensitive small face,
The lengthening gold hair that clusters wild
Like pictures of some aureoled child-saint.
Her deep-blue proud pathetic eyes
(That contradict the smiling of her mouth)
Gaze sadly forth, like God's stars from the skies.

No love in all the world that I have known
Competes at all with that dear love of hers,
No kiss so sweet as kisses from my child,
No other voice that thus my heart-strings stirs.
—Alas! the heavy days when she lay ill!
The small face grown so drawn and deathly white,
The quiet house,—the tidy unused toys,—
The anxious watching through long day and night.

But then what happiness when health crept back,
And my dear treasure was herself at last!
And, sitting on my knee, she leant her face
Against my cheek, her dear arms round me fast,
And babbled of the old accustomed things,
And turned with pleasure to her disused toys.
Dear God! with thankfulness my full heart sings,
For you have spared to me my Joy of Joys!

V.

WHEN I was ill and lay in bed,
My little girl three times a day
The doctor said might visit me,
And for five minutes with me stay.

And all the day as I lay there
Alone, in pain, in my great bed,
I listened for her little voice,
And for her careful tip-toed tread.

Then she came duly creeping in,
And laid in mine her little hand,
And told me the important news
Of what goes on in Schoolroom-Land.

The brightest spot in my dim room
Was her bright hair of burnished gold,
Worn short and full around her face
Like pictures of the saints of old.

"And are you better?" she would say,
"And have you got a pain just now?"
Gazing at me attentively,
With grave blue eyes and serious brow.

But sometimes she would quite forget,
And laugh a laugh that sounded glad,
Or give a hop, and skip about,
And then remember,—and look sad!

Then my dear child would creep away,
And I would lie alone in pain,
Counting the hours that livelong day
Until my darling came again!

CHILDHOOD.

VI.

"COME to me, my little Godchild,"
—Winsome little elf!—
"Would you like a golden money
All for your own self?"

"Oh!" she whispered, when I gave it,
—Blushing little friend!—
"Please tell mother not to save it,
Say it is to spend!"

CHILDHOOD.

VII.

I REMEMBER how I quarrelled
When I was a child,
Turning on a little playmate
Anger fierce and wild.

I was naughty, and I slapped her,
—Hurt her little hands;—
Oft in fancy still I see her
Weeping where she stands.

Then my mother came, and straightway
Took her in her arms;
Comforted her bitter crying,
Silenced her alarms.

Turned to me with grave displeasure,
Where I stood in shame,
Asked me if I was not sorry,
Being so to blame?

Bade me kiss my little playmate,
Wipe away her tears,
Kiss the little hands I wounded,
Calm her little fears.

"For," she said, "you love your playmate
Best of all your friends!"—
Then I said that I was sorry
And would make amends.

So we made our peace together,
Promised to forget;—
Then I saw, to my amazement
Mother's eyes were wet!

I had passed from child to woman
  Ere I understood
How our grown-up mothers suffer
  When we are not good!

CHILDHOOD.

VIII.

IN a lane beyond the village,
  Leaning on his cottage gate,
Day by day I see the victim
  Of a strange and cruel fate.

Sudden smiles and muttered meanings
  Has this hapless idiot-child,
Breaking out in useless gestures
  Or in mirthless laughter wild.

Sometimes in his happy moments,
  To beguile the passing hours,
Round and round the path he wanders
  With a wheelbarrow of flowers.

And I ask myself in wonder,
  Why should God, whom men call kind,
Be so cruel to the parents
  Of that child without a mind?

When I look at my own Dear One
With her intellectual air,
And again at that poor creature
With the hopeless vacant stare,

I can hardly bear the contrast
That exists between the twain;
Why should she have been the favoured?
Why has he the shattered brain?

God, no doubt, has His own answer
To these questionings of ours;
And the witless child seems happy
With his barrow full of flowers.

He, at least, should know no troubles,
Through his changeless clouded hours,
And, for loads of care, should carry
Just his barrow full of flowers!

CHILDHOOD.

IX.

"A MESSAGE for mother?—
My message is this:
Just tell her I send her
My heart in a kiss!"

And then on the paper
A round "O" she traced,
And straight in the middle
A large kiss she placed.

Dear message! dear round kiss!
Dear heart undefiled!
What love can compare with
The love of a child?

CHILDHOOD.

X.

THE PORTRAIT OF A CHILD.

HOW can I paint in words to you,
Dear loved and absent one,
The portrait that you ask of me?
Where find beneath the sun
The colours rich and delicate
With which it should be done?

How demonstrate in measured speech
Her graceful air and ways?
For she is full of subtleties
Like changing summer days.

No words there are that I can find
To fitly speak her praise.

A little maid just five years old,
My heart's dear heaven-sent child,
With childhood's purity revealed,
Gracious and undefiled,
In her divine unconsciousness
And in her accents mild.

The tendrils of soft hair that crown
Her forehead halo-wise
Are brighter in their sunny lights
Than gold that misers prize;
Nor is there flower, or sea, or sky,
As blue as her blue eyes.

Fair as the flower that stands alone
Is that sweet face of hers,
She has a rapt and serious air
That seems beyond her years;
And when you hear her voice, it is
Like one from angel spheres.

A happy nature, grave and gay,
With courteous, gracious mien;
Honest as only children are,—
In ignorance serene.

Her life is sunshine, where as yet
The shadows are unseen.

What say you to my picture, dear?
Though crude and incomplete,
Meseems a semblance yet is there
To her of whom I speak,
Although my words are faint to tell
How dear she is and sweet!

THE EMPTY NESTS.

THE leaves have fallen one by one,
And the shivering trees are bare;
While the empty nests hang here and there
In the branches black and spare.

I think of when those nests were made,
Fair and fine in the green leaves' shade;
In the soft spring days of the mating time,
When the little eggs were laid.

The nests were gay through summer days
With the flutter of little wings,
And the low sweet "cheeping" of callow birds
That wait for expected things.

Then the venturesome time began,
When the little wings spread for flight;
And the parents hovered near at hand,
With warning cries of affright.

At last the day for flitting came,—
For they flew off like all the rest,—
And the parent birds were left alone
By the side of their empty nest.

* * * *

And then I think of my only child,
And the very heart of me,

Who lived within my circling arms
And chattered upon my knee.

I see her now, as I saw her then,
As a fledgeling in my nest,
Who turned to me for help and care,
And sheltered against my breast.

Still further on life's path I see
How the child was to girlhood grown,
Tall and fair, with the same small face,
And her heart still all my own.

And then the books were put away,
For the child is a woman now
Who waits to see what Fate may bring,
With serious eyes and brow.

She dreams of a lover coming,—
A story so old, yet so new,—
Who shall make her earth a heaven;
When she wakes to find it true!

So, like the birds and their nestlings,
She spreads out her wings and flies;
And all alone in her empty nest
The heart of the mother cries.

The leaves have fallen one by one,
And the shivering trees are bare;

But the spring will renew their foliage,
And the birds' nests will be there.

So even my heart takes comfort
From the lesson that Nature gives;
The child is not lost to her mother,
For the mutual love still lives.

CHILD OF MY CHILD.

DEAR Child, you have given me back yourself
In your little son with his eyes so blue
That almost I dream it is you once more,
For just such a blue-eyed babe were you!

Just such a child with the same bright hair,
And the self-same wonderful winning ways,
A smile that ever appealed to my heart,
Merry and loving, it gladdened my days.

Here in my arms is the Child of my Child,
And I hold him close to the lonely heart
That grieved and cried when his mother went
A married maid to a home apart.

I knew that she followed but Nature's laws,
—To leave their mothers is maidens' fate,—

But oh! for the loss of one's only child
Nothing on earth seemed to compensate.

But now you have given me back yourself
In this little one with your eyes and smile,
Who looks in my face, and strokes my hair,
And comforts and fills me with joy the while.

I take him up in my arms and heart
To fill the void, and soothe the ache,
Child of my Child! to hold and to love
Both for his own and his mother's sake.

THE HAND OF TIME.

CHANGED is my girlhood's face, you say,
Altered the look I wore
When first I came and took my place
By Fate's unopened door
Upon the threshold of my life,
With all its joys in store.

I do not venture to resent
Inexorable Fate,
Nor seek to alter or prevent,
Through any peevish hate,
The changes that the hand of time
Has laid on me of late.

What matter that some silver threads
Are seen amongst my hair?
Or if upon my face is shown
A line or two of care?
They prove how thought, and work, and pain
Have left their footprints there,

For all such signs but indicate
The lessons life has taught.
As shadows bring out character,
So faces marked by thought
Do rightly bear the traces of
The battles they have fought.

Vanished is girlhood's careless grace,
Ephemeral it passed;
Then knowledge and compassion came,
With sorrows thick and fast,
To hallow and ennoble what
Was never meant to last.

And so the silver threads I see
Without a trace of shame,
And if my face and brow have changed,
Life only is to blame,
For when Fate called on me to fight,
I answered to my name,

REGRETS.

"*ANGFANGS wollt' ich fast verzagen*
Und ich glaubt' ich trüg' es nie;
Und ich hab' es doch getragen,—
Aber fragt mich nur nicht: wie?"

HEINRICH HEINE.

REGRETS.

I.

WHAT is the good of it
Weeping and grieving?
What can there come of it
Loving and leaving?
—You, who have yearned on me
Lovingly greeting,
What will you now of me
Nevermore meeting?

All that I gave to you
Gone past reclaiming,
See, you turn back from me
Coldly disdaining.
Had I not granted you
Your heart's appealing,
Say, had you loved me still
Supplicant kneeling?

REGRETS.

II.

I WOULD disclaim that we had loved,
Forget that e'er we met;
Disdain all past remembrance,
Deny my soul's regret;
I would command my heart to still
Each foolish broken cry,
And force my nature to be strong
When he is standing by.
How would it help me if I did?
Would that make whole again
The wound from which my heart's-blood flows
With never-ceasing pain?

REGRETS.

III.

I WISH I knew how I can bear it
All my life through.
Perchance my life may be a long one;
What can I do?

I wish I knew how I can meet him
Day after day;
How hide my desolation from him.
Which is the way?

I wish I knew how to endure it;
How to be strong,
With only misery before me
All my life long.

God, help me, send me strength and courage
This side the grave,
Through the long days and nights unending,
Tearless and brave.

REGRETS.

IV.

I LOVE you not, and you
Love me no more;
Then why pretend that all
Is as of yore?

Not you nor I believe
This poor pretence,
We two who once have known
Love's affluence.

Why do you still declare
Love, and protest?
All this is vain as air;
Silence were best.

I will remember you
  As once you were.
I would have died for you,
  Dear, then and there.

Now there is nothing left
  For you and me;
Each of us inly longs
  To be set free.

Let be. Our hearts are dead,
  Our story told;
Nothing can re-awake
  The love of old.

Speak out the truth to me
  Just as I do;
You love me not, and I
  Do not love you!

REGRETS.

V.

MY heart is full of love for you,
  If you would stoop to take it;
But you, you do not care at all,
  You only choose to break it.

My soul is full of prayer to you,
  But you will hear me never,
Although my very life were yours
  To make or mar for ever.

But you,—you gave your heart away
  Long since. Its springs are dry,
And mine that overflows for you
  Can meet with no reply.

REGRETS.

VI.

I WILL not think of you by night and day,
  Till thought becomes a pain that stings my heart
With memories of all the love that was,
And is no more, since here at last we part;—
And yet, in spite of all, whate'er I do,
My thoughts spring forth and cling to you.

I will not weep for you; the fount of tears
With frequent sorrow is at length run dry,
My very heart has wept its tears of blood,
But now I will no longer grieve or cry;—
And yet, in spite of all, I wake from sleep
Against my will with sudden tears, and weep.

I will not care for you; the time is past
When love and hope were centred in your name.
Our ways divide; I loose your hand and go,
And vow I will not love you all the same;—
And yet, whate'er I say, my heart and I
Know well that I must love you till I die.

DISILLUSION.

I WILL seek the woman I loved (he said),
Long ago in life's fortunate days;
I am tired and discouraged and sick at heart,
And my thoughts wander back the remembered ways
To the woman I loved in days that are dead,
And I long for the sight of her face (he said).

She was strangely faithful and kind (he said),
With the gentlest heart and the sweetest eyes
That clung to one's gaze in a passionate way. . . .
And I was a fool to be cold and wise,
To relinquish such love,—seek others instead,—
And leave her alone to despair (he said).

I will go to her now at once (he said),
For life is discordant and out of tune,
And I need her love and her sympathies.
I loved her too lightly and left her too soon,
But the future shall live, and the past is dead,
And my heart yearns back to her heart (he said).

I am here at last in her home (he said);
Here all alone in the twilight gloom
I wait for the sound of her step on the stair
As I sit in her dear familiar room,
With all her sweet flowers, and her books on the shelf,
For nothing is changed here,—excepting myself.

I heard her voice. I remember (he said)
Her voice like a child's with its sobbing tone!
But then came a pause and a whispered word,
A laugh that seemed turning my heart to stone.—
The door opened wide, . . . and my hopes were fled,
For a new love was there by her side! (he said).

WE ARE PARTED.

WE are parted; I have lost you
From my life and from my arms;
With a free and frank surrender
I have silenced my alarms.
You have gone where softs winds murmur,
And where birds divinely sing
In the sweet ambrosial weather
Of an ever-constant spring.

You have gone all flushed and radiant
To that distant sunny clime,
Too absorbed to feel reluctant,
Too contained to find the time
For a thought cast back regretful
To the one you leave behind;
Sad, with sadness sacrificial,
Pale, with trouble out of mind.

You have gone where pleasure leads you,
With your face set towards the south;
There will other arms enfold you,
There will other eyes and mouth
Meet your own in proud possession.
And, meanwhile, were I to die,
Calling on your name in longing,
You would never hear me cry!

Lover mine, I do not murmur
At the strange and cruel fate
That has made our lives so varied,—
Partings here,—delight of late.—
I am thankful for the sunshine
You have shed upon my heart,
And when storm-clouds gather round us
I must take them in good part.

I have watched the darkness growing
When your face was far from sight;
I have shut my eyes, and waited
Through the desolate long night
Of the time when we were parted,
Till with morning's light you came,
Like some knight of ancient story,
True of heart and great of fame.

In your presence I can revel
As the flowers when shines the sun,

In your absence count the moments
  Till my happiness is won;
What you say to me I cherish
  In my spirit's inmost shrine,
Turning each familiar saying
  To a rhapsody divine.

You have gone from me, my darling,
  Only for a little space;
I can think of you, and bless you
  Till I meet you face to face.
I will wish you to be happy,
  Though your joys I may not share;
Battling in supreme endeavour
  Till each thought becomes a prayer.

(*Set to music by the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

A TRUST.

COME near me, little child, and let me look
  Deep down into the blue depths of your eyes
Until I find your wakening soul alight
With promise of a mind that is to be.
It seems to me that even now,—to-night,—
While yet I speak, you hear and understand
The message and the trust I leave to you

To plead for me some day when I am gone.
And you must tell him,—you know whom I mean,—
How hopefully I kissed your folded lips
That should unclose to him my parting prayer;
And how I told, tears breaking in between,
The story that I long for him to hear.
One day, perhaps, when all the clash and clang
Of fancied wrong and passionate appeal
Have turned to calmer feelings,—lesser wrath,—
Then you may go, and, climbing on his knee,
May tell him of the dream that came one night
(The night, perhaps, ere mother went away),
And how you thought she whispered in your dream
To tell him some day that she loved him well,
None better, none beside in all the world,
And that,—however things had looked awry,—
In her deep heart she never did him wrong.
And tell him how she felt the bitter weight
Of her own failing stun her inmost heart
With sense of bitter prophecy; and how,
When she had read his words of cold disdain,
She felt a numbness close around her life
At thinking of her self-inflicted pain,
The shipwreck of her love, the foundering
Of every hope and happiness of heart.
The hardest blow of all perhaps was then,
The knowledge that it all came from her fault.
And so, perhaps, half melted at the thought
That after years of silence you should speak

The parting message of the one he loved,
He, gazing in your eyes, may find again
The look I leave to-night in their blue depths
As surety of my faith; and, seeing clear
Across the gulf that lies 'twixt our two souls,
May haply then perceive my sinlessness,
And, gathering all the truth back to his heart,
May take again my memory as well,
And store it deeply in some tender part
Where love for me had dwelt in dear old days,
And say again: "In truth, she loved me well."

LOVE'S SURRENDER.

AH, dear one, you have asked me for my love,
That priceless gift; I question if you care
To conquer and to gain it as I deem
A true knight should. There is to do and dare,
And lasting love is not a mere day-dream.

Besides, this heart of mine that now you seek
Has grieved and ached and sorrowed. There is left
The memory of trouble,—hope that fails,—
Belief forsworn, and confidence bereft;
And when you speak of love my spirit quails.

Do you not fear to link your fate with mine,
Whose life has been so sad these many years?

What brightness is there left in such as I,
Whose eyes are dim with half a lifetime's tears,
Who dares not trust to love's sweet phantasy?

In vain I reason. In my spirit's depths
An answer stirs to every word you speak;
I would deny your claim, for it were best,
But loud above my doubts and protests weak
I hear my heart's surrender manifest.

"WHAT IS THERE LEFT FOR US TO SAY?"

WHAT is there left for us to say,
Oh love, my love, this winter's day?
When winter's snowflakes drift and fall
Adown our frozen garden wall,
And silent is the garden walk
Where we have paced in eager talk.

What is there left for us to say
But what we know by heart to-day?
There is no need for you to tell
The love of which I know so well;
There is no kiss that I can take
But what a thousand dead ones wake
To warmth and love again, for you
Who know my heart and love are true.

There is no look hid in your eyes
That I could learn with new surprise;
There is no word I could not say,
There is no prayer I could not pray,
Where full within the light of love
I lift my tranquil eyes above.

But there may come, oh love, a day
When we shall turn our eyes away,
Conscious of alteration there.
I shall not know the look you wear;
And my cold hand will clasp your hand
Half absently, as grains of sand
Fall idly through an empty glass.

And we shall speak in accents chill
Of things on which we ponder still,
And turn perhaps to some new face
As if we found it full of grace;
Nor dare to meet each other's scorn
In eyes which no such look had worn
In happy years before regret.
Say, who will teach us to forget
In days when our mad love is dead?
And what new love can pain beget?

(*Set to music by the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

A DEFENCE.

LOOK in my eyes, and in your strong right hand
Hold my hand strongly; thus shall we twain be
United in pulsation. As your soul
Encounters my soul's gaze, and as my pulse
Beats one with yours, have patience with me, love,
And understand that this proud heart of mine
Must suffer tortures in that I implore
So humbly of your courtesy. You think
That I have wronged you. At least you say as much.
But I who know you,—I who learn of love
To know your lightest mood,—I think perhaps
You do but say you're wronged, and in your heart
You know 'tis otherwise. At all events,
What 's said is solemn. You have said, God wot,
Enough to break this heart and strength of mine;
And were it not that through your words of blame
There pierces no true dart, I could not stand
And meet the angry fire of your blue eyes
So steadfastly, nor quail beneath your just
Upbraiding. I wronged you weakly,—that I own,—
Through lack of courage, not through lack of faith;
And, had I boldly told the trivial truth,
You had not found such fault with me, because
I did no wrong. But, in withholding it,
I did a wrong. And this I know I did,
And say so with humility. The wrong

Once shown, you thought much worse were done, of which
God knows I'm innocent. And all my oaths
Most sacred and austere you cast aside
Impatiently, as if this mimic wrong
Had dwarfed all sense of justice in your heart,
And proved me worthless. So we parted, you
And I. (Such lovers as we were!) You said
That all was over, and I sadly bent
To your decree. For in your wrath you said
So many things, too gravely true, that cut
My heart, and so I could not well do aught
But leave you.
My poor body, weaker than my will,
Stricken, convulsive, showed the pangs of grief
In sudden illness, whilst my shaken mind
For a space wandered wild. 'Twas then you came,
Called hither by some other voice than mine
(For I had never called upon your sympathy);
You came, and held me senseless in your arms,
And kissed and clasped me warm, till my poor soul,
Called back from wandering, leapt back to your touch,
And straightway knew you for yourself, and grew
Into life's consciousness again. And then,
When my sad eyes had opened to your eyes
And caught some reassurance from your smile,
I felt as if it all were some bad dream,—
No quarrel, and no parting, but a kiss

Of perfect unison. Yet vaguely still
I felt some landmark had been overthrown
And then set straight again; for your dear eyes
Were full of loving care for me. That night
I slept most peacefully, and, longing, looked
For sight of you again. But when you came
And found me stronger, all the mercy left
Your grave, stern face; and though your tone implied
Solicitude, there was no love to warm
And greeten my poor heart. And coldly calm
You spoke your cold, calm words of blame. You said
You loved me still, but not with that same love
Of heretofore. Not with the same dear love.
Not trusting, nor approving, but with love
Begotten of affectionate solicitude.
But this, oh lover, this poor stunted love
I will not have,—I will not have, I say!
Give me the same as heretofore, or give
Me nothing. I can boldly claim your faith
And trust in me, for in my soul's pure depths
There is no wrong towards you. I will brook
No measured love, no shrunken trust, no lack
Of passionate devotion. For all this
I claim; and if you give it not, I say
Give nothing. Loose my hand to-day, and let
The old love go. It was too great and fond
To stoop to lesser gifts. So let it die
At one fell blow, as dies some noble soul.
What is your answer? Here, upon my heart,

With arms cast close about me, tell me now,
For you alone can choose: what shall it be—
The old mad love or nothing? Dear one, speak!

A DREAM.

I DREAMT; and dreaming saw my dear one come
And lay a hand upon my aching brow;
It lay there cool and light, a gift of peace;
And deep athwart my senses straightway now
The touch like magic through my being stole,
Like subtle music to my inmost soul.

Dear hand! dear touch! what comfort you can give!
Refreshed and solaced then I raised my eyes
And saw in yours the deepest look of love
That ever dared my brightest hopes surmise.
And then you spoke; and every word still seems
Clear in my heart as in that land of dreams.

You asked me for the gift of this poor hand
You held so close and warm between your own,
And found sweet praises for my lips and eyes,
For every feature was some merit shown.
And kneeling there, so eager, bold and gay,
You stilled all doubting,—drove all fears away.

And then I woke, and found it was no dream!
The dream had substance for its dear delight;
My hand in yours, your kiss upon my lips,
Love's day had dawned for me,—transcendent, bright,—
Whilst heart to heart responded clear and deep
The promise that futurity shall keep.

YESTER-YEAR.

HAD I but heard
When yester-year dear Love came near
And cried and called to me in vain,
And sang sweet songs I would not hear,
Still pleading on,—again, again,—
Had I but heard! Had I but heard!

Had I but seen
Love standing by with longing eyes,
And outstretched arms held forth to me!
The joyous face I would not see
Turned slowly back regretfully!—
Had I but seen! Had I but seen!

Had I but felt
That Love was knocking at my heart!
I could not feel,—my heart was stone,

And beats to-day to find that now
My heart and I are all alone.—
Had I but felt! Had I but felt!

Had I but known
That I should crave with mad regret
For that dear love of yester-year's;
Grown sad with longings to forget,
Through yearning days and nights of tears.—
Had I but known! Had I but known!

(*Set to music by Mrs. Harding Cox and the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

LIFE'S CHANGES.

THE spirit faints and dies in me to-night
For weariness of life. Like some caged bird
That beats its wings against the prison bars,
And, stunned and bleeding, falls powerless there,
To die of its own wounds. So seems to me
The hurt I fain would die of, for I feel
My heart must break for too much love cast down
Before an earthly idol turned to stone.—
How far it seems, that time when the deep love
Of both our hearts united in a swoon

Of sweet delirium! When our spent souls
In faint, dim sense came back to us, and found
Our lips still married in a close embrace!
Oh fair, bright dreams that love begot in love's
Own sheltering arms! How warm, how soft, how
grand,
Were those deep silences of dear delight!—
No more for me, nor such as I, to dream
That love can live immortal. Love's delight
Must turn to fruits of love that ripen slow,
And hurt in ripening. 'Twas thus with me,
When deep into the mystic shades of death
I felt my spirit sink in tortured swoon
In search of that strange motherhood that crowns
With crown of pain the blessèd fruit of love.
And when at last I woke, half-dead, half-faint,
And turned my tired eyes to meet those eyes
I most have loved, I found them altered, chilled,
And pitiful, that once gazed back on me
Their passionate intensity. So changed,
Alas! and yet with studied care he strives,
For pity's sake, to seem the same to me,
Whose poor pale face has lost all power to charm.
He gives me naught to take exception to,
Because I am so very weak, too weak
To bear the force of grief to-day. But I
Were not a woman did I not perceive,
With intuition born of love, the change
That time had wrought. I did not rave or cry,

But very meekly, with the grief that stills
All peevish clamourings, I smiled as if
I thought that all were well. But now, alone,
God's silence wrapped around me absolute,
I question of my heart what cure there is
For wounds that tear the heart's cords, and what balm
For hurts that kill life's joyousness. For ills
Of body science finds strange cures, and makes
Some wonderful recoveries. But how
Recover what is gone from me to-day?
What strength can hearts regain, once widowed? What
For one who dies of hopelessness, who once
Was rich in hope's best gifts? I have my child
To comfort me; but what a pang when most
Her eyes shall look like his, or when some smile,
Or growing likeness, tears my heart-strings numb
With painful memory of my deathless love!

UNEXPRESSED.

THERE is a song that I would sing,
There are some words that I would say,
If all the music that I know
Seemed worthy of my theme to-day.

But I have sung so oft of love,
That all the words I use seem vain;
And thus the music that I hear
Falls silent in my soul again.

I sang of pain with tears and sighs,
When all my life was free from care;
I wrote of joy and ecstasy,
In days when grief was everywhere.

What words are left to tell to-day
Of all the gladness that I know?
What music can I find to show
The solemn joy I feel to-day?

And just because it is so dear,
And just because it is so rare,
I feel all music stilled in me,
And words too poor my heart to share.

And so the songs that I would sing,
And all the words that I would say,
Must speak to thy own heart alone
Of all the love I feel to day.

(*Set to music by the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

IN THE RAINY WEATHER.

WHAT rhyme shall I make for my love
Out of the rainy weather,
As we walk out hand in hand
In the teeth of the wind together?

The spectral trees fling wide about
Their withered, leafless branches,
The very grasses seem in doubt,
And shiver in their places.

The leaden sky leans threateningly,
And mutters distant thunder;
The cattle hide themselves 'neath trees,
And shrink away in wonder.

Shall I sing of the soft springtime,
When first we began to meet?
Or tell of the rapturous days
When summer was spread at our feet,

And the radiant sun overhead
Seemed to swoon with our joy and love,
And the butterflies danced in our path,
And the birds sang loud above?

Shall I tell of the glory thrown
By rich tints in autumn days,
While sure and calm in our love
We lingered through wooded ways?

Or sing of this wild, wet weather,
  Blown kisses of wind and rain,
Whilst clinging closely together
  We battle the stormy strain?

"Which weather is best to love in?"
  You ask, but I cannot say,
For the love that lies within us
  Can live through a winter's day.

Come winter, or spring, or summer,
  Our love is for ever strong,
For to-morrow shall be as to-day,
  And love last our whole lives long.

PROTEST.

WHAT is this coldness, and this difference that grows
Between, and parts us soul from soul, oh love, my love?
What is this numbness at my heart; this saddening sense
That something in my life has been displaced, distraught?
Whose fault is it,—and what? I question of myself,
And scarcely know where it began, or how 'twill end.
But yet, oh heart! this life is short and scant of joys;

And shall we see this little rift break through our ways,
Nor step across together? Shall we let cold thoughts
Creep close within our happy hearts, and chill our lives
For naught? I who love speak feelingly; because I love,
And hold love as so dear, and rate its joys so high,
I cannot bear to lose it without at least
A hand outstretched to take it back, and hold it here
Warm to my heart again. But you,—perhaps your love
Is not so great as mine, and you can see it fade,
As fades and dies away some strain to childhood dear,
That years have jangled, and whose cadence strikes your ear
Discordantly, because 'tis too well known, and palls
With too long hearing. Well, if it is so, oh love!
Say so in round tones; nor fear from me, at least,
Peevish remonstrance, or weak woman's tears. None such
Shall call forth your disdain. But tell me so in truth,
And let me know it from your own bold words, and not
From signs and symbols; nor still more from a neglect
That grows apace, or widening of our close-set paths;
Nor yet from careless lovelessness. For I, you know,
Am but a woman; and when you are cold I fain
Would warm you with soft words of love, and bring again
The love-light to your eyes. But what avails such warmth

If you are cold for ever? And what avails
A woman's love poured forth on unresponsive lips?
I could not bear to take your hand and say to-day
(As I have said before): "What ails you, love?" and find
No answer to my fond solicitude; no light
Flash back in tenderness again, but lovelessness
And death to old fond thoughts. It is not well to see
What has been blest decay and slowly die, with pain
Drawn out throughout the listless, loveless days. We see
Some creature dying slowly, and we drown our eyes
In tears for its sad fate. But love! What is so sad
As dying love with shrunken faded charms, each hour
More wan and spent? Oh! were it not more kind, more right
To strike the blow out fairly? Kill with one strong stroke,
And put an end for ever to its bleeding life?
None such are good to keep. You hear me, oh my dear.
I am a woman, and a woman's views are called
By men illogical. You as a man must judge
Of me, and tell me now what you may find to say
In answer to my protest. Let your words be true
As I have found them ever; and speak outright
The reason of this coldness, or, if needs must be,
The requiem of our love.

REMEMBERED.

I HAVE known it all before,
In some strange remembered state,
And your voice, your touch, your smile,
Are merely a trick of fate
That carries me back to times
When my soul and yours were met
In some vague and mystic sphere
Which we cannot quite forget.

Perhaps,—if I could but know it,—
The thrill that I felt to-day
Was the remembered echo
In some of the things you say;
I have seen you in my dreams,
And the very smile you wore,—
Half proud, half sympathetic,—
I have known it all before.

And now,—a careless hand-clasp,
And the grave and searching look
Of one who from mere habit
Reads faces like a book,
Carried me back resistless
To a time ignored by man,
When we two lived triumphant,
Before the world began.

You were a Faun, I fancy,—
  And I some strange wild thing,
That crawled to your feet submissive,
  Or turned at bay to spring!
Your gaze alone could still me,
  Your touch conceived my soul,
And sealed through endless ages
  Your claim upon the whole.

All that I am I owe you,
  And all that I yet may be
Must still be yours to measure
  Through all eternity.
What though I never see you
  In endless distance thrown,
Like spirits long divided,
  But never quite alone;

There yet must come a moment
  Before the end of years,
When bonds shall burst asunder
  And soul to soul appears.

MATER CONSOLATRIX.

THROUGH the dim arches of the quiet church,
Across the shadows that the pillars cast,
A woman glided on her silent way,
And down her bended face the tears fell fast
With grief she could not stay.

She threw herself before Our Lady's feet,
And humbly bowed her forehead to the stone;
No sound there was upon the heavy air,
Except the sobs that broke from her alone,
In bitter anguish there.

The lighted candles stood before the shrine,
The fragrant stillness held the flowers' perfume;
A sense of solace filled the holy place,
To raise the sick soul from its deathly swoon
With clement gift of grace.

It seemed to her that Our dear Lady smiled
With heavenly pity on her anguish wild:
"Oh, Mary mother, thou who lovedst thy Son,
Give me some comfort. I have lost my child,
My only little one!"

Herseemed the gracious vision, bending low,
Breathed softly in the weeping mother's ear

AN ANSWER.

BID me not choose; only you could have chosen;
I am a woman, and born to be weak,
And, if I love you, as time shall discover,
You will not know it, for I shall not speak.

You will not love me,—of this I am certain;
To like me were folly, to love me were worse.
Stay where you are in the dim realms of fancy,
And dream not of love, for love is a curse.

"I KNOW NOT, DO YOU LOVE ME STILL."

I KNOW not, do you love me still
Across the seas that separate,
Since that last unforgotten day
When we two cried against our fate,
To part so soon, who met too late!

I cannot hear the thrushes' song
Call clear across the budding wood,
But what I think how we last spring
Together, hand-clasped, listening stood,
Where all to-day is solitude.

Ah, sometimes do you think of me
In twilight when the setting sun
Paints crimson colours in the west
To tell us that the day is done?
Are you still true, dear absent one?

The silence chills my patient heart;
I know not, dear, if you regret,
But this I know, and this I swear:
I do not change, I love you yet,
I would not, if I could, forget!

LOVE'S SHIPWRECK.

I WILL not think you meant those words,
Those last sad words, this last sad day,
When all the world is blurred with tears
I have no heart to wipe away.

The world and I are growing old,
Too sad to woo, too proud to crave
The sumptuous measure of your love,
Which once with lavish hand you gave.

Just enough courage have I left,
Who see love's shipwreck close ahead,
To cast myself away from you,
That I may founder in your stead.

(*Set to music by the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

SPRING.

A WARM rain falling from the misty skies
Upon the moist brown earth the plough upheaves,
The green world waking from its winter sleep,
A warm wind blowing through the budding leaves.
A sunbeam's fitful gleam
Across the swollen stream,
And chattering swallows building in the eaves.

A thousand new sounds fill the thrilling air,
The lark poised high pours forth his madrigal,
The noisy blackbird and the thrush are there
Seen large amongst the sparsely foliaged trees;
They flit across the glade
In the track the sunshine made,
Their song re-echoed on the perfumed breeze.

Bright eyes of opening flowers deck the grass,
The golden daffodils in brave array
Stand sentinels amid the garden ranks
Of gaudy crocuses that stand at bay;
Whilst the potent perfume
Of the hyacinths' bloom
Makes heavy the air around and away.

And even as the Spring is manifest
In flowers that bloom and budding leaves that break,

So does my heart rouse from its winter sleep.
The old old pain is past, new hopes awake,
Like blossoms on a grave
They greenly bloom and wave,
And peace is in my heart for Spring's dear sake.

RENUNCIATION.

I WRITE not, dear, in anger, though I say
That this is my farewell. A woman's needs
Are greater than a man's perception can attain;
And love grows rank when overchoked with weeds.
I would not seem exacting when I ask
For what you have withheld me. Men, I know,
Fail sometimes through not knowing. They can see
The great things only, and the lesser go.
But we, who live upon these lesser things,
We who count by our own heart's-throbs every word
That we have missed or yearned for; we, who sit
And dream of tender things we once had heard;
We, who can but love; we, who can but give,
And with fine perception find at last
The flaw in what seemed fair; we can but say
As I say now: "Farewell; the dream is past!"
And you, who let the lesser things go by
Unheeded, heed these words of mine to-day,
And if my sorrow can but teach you aught

To save your heart such sorrow,—then I say
I have not felt in vain this heartbreak; for
If learning from my sorrow you can go
Through life unsorrowed, it is well with me,
And e'en my trouble fits me better so.
You see this nature that you once approved,
This soul you said could soar to man-like heights,
Has proved you right. I could not let mean words
Undo the good that you have thought of me.
And even in this shipwreck I can bear
The worst, because I know that in your heart
You'll say, "This woman's nature is a noble one."
But I, whose qualities you praised, whose soul
(Grown larger with your love) had leapt to heights
Diviner than you knew, I cannot be content
With light and facile love that fancy brings
To-day, and lets fall dead at night, unquickened
By any fire of deeper love that grows
In hearts true moulded more as time goes on,
Like shadows that a spreading chestnut throws;
I cannot stop and say to my full heart:
"No further, love. Enough! it is not meet
To pass the limits of the sort of love
That calmly lives with economic feet,
Set where no danger can accrue; where a retreat
Can hurt no bystander, still less ourselves."
This heart of mine that overflows with all
A passion-tossed poetic nature can inspire,
Must love or break, must give or die, 'tis clear.

Half-measures are not ours, half-thoughts, half-words,
These things come not from natures so possessed
With all that is most hell or heaven-born,
With which this life of mine is cursed or blessed.
And I who love you, I who see
No flame light up your soul to reach the heights
That mine, unchecked, has soared to, sadly say:
"You can but love according to your lights"—
'Tis not your fault that yours burn dim, nor yet
My fault that mine has blazed on high so bright.
I learn my lesson early. You perchance had learnt
To love like this before. This I cannot know.
I only know that now, whilst these tears fall,
Whilst all my soul in agony must call
In vain to you for succour, whilst I stand
With arms outstretched to reach you, with right hand
Outheld in pleading, whilst my nature yearns
In tenderness too subtle to describe,
I feel all this must be like eager waves
That beat upon a barren shore, on which
They never gain. And so, farewell. I beat
My life out 'gainst the bars that bind your spirit in,
But naught can loose it. Therefore, love, farewell!

VINDICATION.

AN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

YOUR words have moved me strangely. Your high heart
And noble aim to judge of me so ill!
And your white soul to seek to know my soul
That life has blackened! Rather try to know
The man who loves you by his deeds and words,
And let comparison between two lives
(As much removed as Earth from Heaven!)
Alone. My past is all my own. Yet if
It were a pure white past, and fit for you
To gaze upon, I should have opened it,
Page after page, and said, "Behold my past,
Lived pure in expectation of your love."
But no; my life was not so chaste that I
Could bear to drag much out to gaze upon.
And since in those gone days I knew you not,
It does not matter whom I knew or loved.
A man who dedicates his life, like some green spring,
To what may come to him in after years
Is not a man. Say rather he's a saint—
And saints are scarce, my sweet one! Men who live
As I have done will tell you so as well.
Perchance you had not loved me, save perchance
For these same faults you blamed in me last night.
You say I do not love you, that no flame
Lights up my soul to reach the heights that yours

Unchecked has soared to! Poor sweet child! can you
Who measure love take length and breadth of what
You do not see or guess at! Men, you know
(Or rather do not know!), are not all made
Within the self-same mould, and ways of men
Differ. Ways of showing love are different.
You cannot take a man like me and bind him fast
Within the silken fetters of expected love;
Nor say because I do not smile, and talk, and run,
And do your bidding blindly, that I do not love!
I cannot tear my heart out that your eyes
May rightly read its meaning. Nor protest,
As younger men might do, that love like mine
Had never been before! All this is froth,
Not love. The sort of froth one sweeps aside
To see the shining of the wine below.
There is no depth in your true heart, that mine
Has not perceived and warmed to. No fine thought
I have not felt, and answered to as well
As in me lies; and yet you do not know me!
You must take the measure of my love by those
That you have known before, and say at heart,
"Herein he fails," or "This was different," until
There comes a time when you must doubt of all,
As you are doing now. You say farewell
In language that bewilders whilst it charms.
You give up love and lover; throw aside
All claims of mine or yours; all hopes of mine.
And why? Because some forms of surface love

That any fool can feign are overlooked by me,
Because such things as those do not pertain
To what I reckon love. And your high soul
I rate so highly soars too high to see
The strong deep current of my love for you,
Which you call light and facile. Take my hand
And look full in my eyes, and tell me now
If I have failed in great things, where my love
When called in question could avail you good or
strength?
Ah! that you grant me. Then, my love, forbear
To take such umbrage at the loss of lesser proofs
Of what I have assured you. No neglect
Or want of love is here. So take back faith,
And take back love and lover for the sake
Of all the truth he gave, and gives you still!

CLOUDS.

WE had quarrels,—lovers' quarrels,—
In our sunny past;
But our trust was deep and tender,
So they could not last.

Once,—how well I can remember!—
All one radiant day,
We two stood apart in silence,
Turning hearts away.

When the evening came,—those evenings
That were all so bright,
Lighting up the hours of absence
With their happy light,—

Then you came and sat beside me
In your old fond way,
Took my hand, and strove to reason;—
But I turned away.

And you pleaded, pleaded firmly,
In your bitter pain,
Pouring forth a wealth of love-words
On my heart like rain.

Still I would not turn, and coldly
Bade you to depart,
Though your tender words were stirring
Deeply in my heart.

But you would not leave me, urging
All your loving past;
Then my foolish pride forsook me,
And I turned at last.

Turned, to find you fondly waiting,
Full of love and fears;
Gladly in your arms you clasped me
Smiling midst my tears.

* * * * *

That was long ago, I fancy;
Things are altered now,—
You and I are cold and parted,
Hardly knowing how.

Meeting sometimes, calmly conscious
Of our presence here,
Proud eyes fixed and unrelenting
That were once so dear.

Clasping hands, but clasping coldly
With a distant air,
And a knowledge of estrangement
Like a weight of care.

If they told me you were dead, dear,
In your cold still grave,
I could bear my sorrow nobly,
Loving still, and brave.

Looking up to heaven, conscious
That you loved me there,
Sending down a blessing for me
Through the starry air.

But this death in life, this breaking
Of the old true bond,
And this severance of friendship
Once so strong and fond,—

This I cannot bear; the sorrow
Weighs upon my heart.
Must our lives flow on divided?
Must we stand apart?

OUR LONGINGS.

THERE is something beyond,—something beyond,—
But where is it hiding, that vague fair dream?
Always above us, always beyond us,
A beacon as bright as the sun's glad beam.

Alas! how often we try to grasp it,
And our eager hands are outstretched in vain!
But our yearning eyes gaze always upwards,
Striving so weakly our purpose to gain.

How grand it seems in our expectation,—
That unknown something so veiled from our eyes;
How bitter our cry of blind displeasure
Against the just God who is always wise!

But harder, far harder, the painful wisdom
(For it comes at last after weary years),
When the longed-for something is in our grasp,
So faded and poor midst our bitter tears.

Tears,—when we find our idol shattered,
Or our cherished hope as a thing of air;
Knowing that years have been spent in longing
For something unworthy of love and care.

Then is the hour when the heart is riven,—
Then is the time when the blinding tears fall;
To know that what we have loved is worthless,—
Oh! that is the cruellest pain of all!

AN APOLOGY FOR FLIRTATION.

"AH! 'women are fickle!' you tell me.
Well,—yes,—if by fickle you mean
A trifle less false than you men are,
And greatly more true than we seem."

"But women are cruel—so cruel!
They flatter and coax for a while,
Then tread on the hearts that we give them;
And deal us a blow with a smile!"

"We are cruel,—it may be; but cruel
In a million of charming ways;
So sorry at times to have hurt you,
So kind on the gloomiest days.

"But you men!—you calculate nicely
How near you may go, or how far,
And never one moment you waver,
Nor pity the hopes that you mar.

"And when you at last are successful,
And the flower floats down at your feet,
Its colours are no more so perfect,
Its perfume is no more so sweet.

"You leave it to lie on the roadside
(First trampling it down in the dust!),
And fancy that such is your right, here,
To break and to outrage our trust.

"You think us so weak, till we sting you,
And give you at last your deserts,
And then you turn round in your anger,
And vow that all women are flirts!

"Believe me, that if you would let us
Be honest and true, as we are,
(Not striving to conquer us always,)
The world would be better by far!"

REMEMBER.

REMEMBER, when the sun is rising gently,
And rosy mists unfold to meet the dawn;
And golden clouds above are fading slowly,
And earth is joyful that the day is born.

Remember, when the flowers unfold their petals
To gaze in fervent rapture at the sun,
And fair birds' voices rise in sweetest music,
And woods re-echo now the night is done.

Remember, when in brightest midday glory,
The gay-winged butterflies flit here and there,
And children, blinded by the sun's great splendour,
With merry voices fill the fragrant air.

Remember, when the twilight shadows gather,
And the long day for evermore is past,
When cattle to their sheds are slowly turning,
And tired reapers gain their homes at last.

Remember, when the pale sad moon has risen
And floods a silver light across the wood,
And fair birds sweetly sing their evening carol,
As if to thank the Lord that He is good.

Remember, when the night is very quiet,
Save for the gentle rippling of the lake,
Where closed white lilies float so softly sleeping,
And only passing zephyrs are awake.

Remember, yet again, when midnight glory
And silver moon shed radiance all around,
And fireflies dart where shadows lie the deepest,
And heaven's stars gaze sadly on the ground.

Remember that I left you in great sorrow;
Remember how you laughed and scorned my love;
Remember how I turned away to leave you,
While the pale moon shone deeply from above.

Remember how my words in parting told you
That the great love you spurned as poor and vain
Would wait, embalmed in patient sadness,
Until one day you paid me for my pain.

Remember how I passed away in anguish,
Afraid to trust my trembling voice to speak,
Because I knew, in all your heartless beauty,
You'd scorn me more, and say that I was weak.

Remember then, I say, in midnight silence,
When thoughts are sad, and tender thoughts are rife,
That all the great deep love that I then gave you
Waits but your touch to start again to life.

ICHABOD.

THE days are full of sadness,
The nights are full of pain;
The hours that are fleeting onwards
Will never come back again.

The house is standing silent,
No step is on the stair;
My heart beats slow and coldly
As I pass a vacant chair.

The flowers bloom their fairest,
The birds' songs fill the air,
But the form that I have worshipped,—
Oh! my love is no more there.

The hearth is left all cheerless
  Of her sweet and vanished grace;
Of all that I have cherished
  There remains an empty place.

The night comes cool and balmy,
  And stars in the far-off skies
Gaze, through the growing darkness,
  With my lost one's serious eyes.

The sea has its mighty waves,
  The river its ceaseless flow,
The world has her many pleasures,—
  But I have only my woe!

(*Set to music.*)

A REMONSTRANCE.

AH, was it nobly done of him, if he
  Could not love me, to speak of love so well,
With fervent eloquence, checked back with scorn,
  The highest and the truest love to tell,
    Who had no love to give?

Why did he bend his eyes on me at times,
  Reluctantly, yet lovingly withal;
Take both my hands in his, and calmly speak
  Words of wise counsel, that were so much gall,
    Who had no love to give?

And smile sometimes,—a bland indulgent smile,—
  While listening to the passion of my speech;
Lifting his brows, too, with a strange surprise,
  Standing so far above me, out of reach;
    Who had no love to give?

At times begin to speak of abstract things
  With eyes that looked beyond me; and then break
Into a cold low laugh of self-disdain:
  "Too young to understand, e'en for my sake,
    Who have no love to give!"

Then to my eager question answer naught,
  Nor seem aware that all the time my hand
Lay still within his own,—forgotten there,—
  Like seaweed on a gold uncaring strand,
    Who had no love to give.

Ah well! he cannot say to-day that I
  Most fully do not understand, whose life
Has been torn up by root and branch, to strew
  The fairest flowers in his path so rife,
    Who had no love to give.

Youth could not hold me back. All wisdom
  Died. My heart's love budded in the bleakest air;
And, frozen with the coldness of his smile,
  He turned away and let it perish there,
    Who had no love to give.

What can the great world offer now, I ask,
In all the richness of its rolling years?
What pleasure in the warmth of sunny days?
For the sod at my feet is dank with tears,
Who have no love to give.

Does the heart's core send forth such blossoms twice?
Are the gods so cruel? Is life so hard?
Ah no! for such love has no second fruits;
Lives do not blossom so deeply scarred,
Who have no love to give!

AN AUTUMN MEETING.

AH! you who jested, I who smiled,
A year ago, one autumn day,
An autumn morning we beguiled
In what we thought a harmless way.

And half in earnest, half in play,
We told the stories of our past,—
And part was sad, and part was gay,
And friendship ripened very fast.

There stole a touch of sympathy
Through all our pleasant careless talk;
Then we clasped hands in mutual trust,
And stopped a moment in our walk.

And, stopping once, we lingered long,
  And found so much that we could say;
Grown earnest, too, we quite forgot
  We had begun in such mere play!

Until at last you said, "Good-bye!
  I wonder shall we meet again?
The world is narrow, friends are few;
  I hope we have not met in vain?"

But I, who smiled, have no more smiles
  To give to those who come and go;
I think of that short autumn day,
  And all we said a year ago.

A WOMAN'S WISDOM.

YOU blame me that I cannot love
  As you can love, my friend;
You call me heartless,—light of faith,—
  Because my fancies end!

I do not say it is not true;
  Oh no! your words are right.
But you who love, and I who laugh,
  Which gains most in the fight?

And why, if you were seeking love,
  Should you have turned to me?
I, who of all that meet your gaze
  Have sworn inconstancy!

Go further yet, poor heart, and seek
  For one who still can give;
Or, if your heartbreak prove too sharp,
  Curse me, my friend,—and live.

Yes! once I cursed,—and lived. Alas!
  'Tis better far to die;
Hands meekly crossed and prayerful,
  Eyes upturned to the sky.

I loved too well.—Ah! never judge
  Of past days by to-day!
Yesterday's rose was sweet and rare;
  To-day,—'tis thrown away!

I loved too well,—as you, my friend,
  Are loving me this hour;
Such loves die hard, are cursed, we know,
  With overwhelming power.

My love went out,—as yours will do,—
  But after many years;
And in those years I was not glad,
  And many were my tears.

My love was like your love, my friend;
It met with no return,
In spite of passionate appeal,
In spite of words that burn.

But you who love, and I who laugh,
May part at least in peace;
One day you'll thank me for my words,
One day your pain will cease.

RESURGAM.

BELOVÈD one, the light of day
Has faded from thine eyes away;
Thy breath no longer comes and goes;
Thou sleepest now in God's repose.

Still I can hold thy little hand,—
Thy spirit in a fairer land,—
And kiss thine eyelids down to rest,
E'en murmur gently, "It is best."

Yes, I can stroke thy shining hair,
A happy sunbeam nestling there;
And gaze upon thy still white face,
Folding thy hands as a sign of grace.

And yet I loved thee well indeed,
Took of thy slightest word full heed;
Still I can bear to hear all say,
"He does not care, he smiles to-day."

And yet,—and yet,—the weary tears
Will cloud mine eyes these many years;
The thought of thee, and thy sweet life,
Will help me through the world's cold strife.

And when at last God sends me rest,
My head will sink upon thy breast;
And gladly will I close mine eyes
To meet thee, love, beyond the skies.

(*Set to music.*)

AFTER THREE YEARS.

TURN to the light and let me see you well,
And mark the changes wrought by three years' time
Upon your eager face and fervent lips,
Too sweet for cold approval in mere rhyme.
Three years have passed since last those eyes of yours
Flashed into mine their blue and subtle fire;
Three years have gone since any words of yours
Have spoken answer to my heart's desire.

Oh sweet! my poet! has your fancy shown
At times a vision of my futile life?
All colourless of love, cold, stunted, bare
Of fruitful blossom that had once been rife.
Oh love, my love, what time my love has clung
In every sense to you, what have you thought?
What have you done, or dreamt, or lived for? Say!
What wisdom have the changing seasons brought?

Ah me, you do not answer, and your hand
Grows cold within my own,—so warm of yore!
What! is it so? and have these hearts of ours
Woke up as two, that were but one before?
Nay, drive the pain back from those two blue eyes,
And leave all reasoning. There is no need
For any words to-day. Mine eyes have seen
Too well; and measured words I should not heed.

But, oh my poet! I, who see to-day
The world recede from me, and leave me where
All hopes fall dead, I say no word of blame,
That a girl might say in her great despair.
There shall never a cold, hard word break through
Where the beautiful blossom of love hath grown;
I bless you for much, I free you of all;
For the dead buried past is still my own.

LIFE AND DEATH.

WE stood on the brink of a river,
And that river's name was Life,
And on its dark waters floated
Grim vessels of war and strife.

We stood by the brink of that river,
And I laughed at the water's moan,
For my darling was beside me,
And in his heart my home.

We walked by the side of that river,
And my darling whispered to me,
"Hark to the wail of the river
As it hastens on to the sea!"

The river grew wider and stronger,
As it flowed with its ceaseless moan,
And my love crossed over the water,
And left me,—forlorn,—alone.

I will follow that river sadly,
Through the chain of weary years,
Till I gain the far-off ocean
With bitter blinding tears.

For I know that when the river
Is hushed on the sea's blue tide,

I shall see my lost love, waiting
For me by the ocean's side.

And so I hasten onwards,
With feeble failing breath,
Longing to meet with the ocean,
For the ocean's name is Death!

BENEDICTUS.

THE love on which I leant for health and strength,
The guide and solace of my happier days,
The fond true heart that beat for me alone,
The tender words that eased the world's hard ways,
All this is gone,—nor left one shadow to remain
To soften down my loss, or soothe my bitter pain.

Gone!—I had leant on it so long, alas!
Grown so accustomed to the aid and strength
Of that large influence, that I moved about
As one who feels the earth to sway beneath,
And turns round groping, blinded by a giddy fear,
Whose voice is numbed, and ears refuse to hear.

The shock was sudden, and the lesson stern,
Of my fair idol shattered at my feet;

Gone from its pedestal above my reach,
And fallen from its safe accustomed niche;
So I staggered,—stumbling,—and thought the light above
Had all gone out with this one perishable love.

But now the sting is past. I will not rant
Nor rave against all love, all hope, all life,
And fill the air with useless clamourings,
And combat with my fate in needless strife,
Nor let God's lovely world appear to pale and smart
By the dire influence of one false, fickle heart.

Why should I think all fair things foul and dank
Because such love has failed me; turn aside
And deem all life a curse, all hopes in vain,
And veil my sorrow in a scornful pride?
For nobler things, perchance, await me; and my life
May find some grand fulfilment in a holier strife.

Perhaps the losing of this present love
May bring a truer vision to my sight;
The clouds may pass away, the distance clear,
And flood my nature with a purer light;
So may I bless the losing of that failing heart,
That threw a brighter radiance on a wiser part.

FIDELIS.

FADED and dead
Are the lilac trees,
Fallen and shed
Are the roses' leaves,
Long passed away
Into decay
Are the nests in the eaves.

Winter is here,
The shining snow
Covers the flowers
Sleeping below.
Silent and still
Is the leafless wood,
The spot is frozen
Where once you stood.

The wild waves roar
Upon the shore,
And what is gone
Comes back no more.
I sob out my heart
In a storm of tears;
There is no hope
For the coming years.

My happy days
Are dead and past;

And I have buried
  My heart at last.
Let it be; another
  Will not be as true
As I have been,
  False one, to you.

You may search wide,
  But all in vain;
Your future life
  Will have its pain.—
Still, if one day
  You need a friend,
I shall be ready,
  And you will send.

But this farewell
  Must be my last;
I still can ponder
  On what is past.
All links are broken
  Now this is spoken;
This is my token
  That love can last.

PARTING.

ALTHOUGH these hands that clasp so close
May never clasp again;
Although these yearning eyes are full
Of parting and of pain;
Yet can I thank thee for the past,—
I have not loved in vain.

Although this agony is great,
Although my tears fall fast,
And all the future seems a blank
With shadows overcast;
I would not, if I could, undo
One moment of the past.

I feel thine arms about my neck,
Thy lips to mine are pressed,
And sorrow merges in delight,
And trouble into rest;
Then must we part, O heart of mine!
When love and hope are best?

HEAVEN OR HELL.

IF I, all so unworthy, so unfit,
Should wake from Death as from a painful dream,
And see eternity's unclouded sun
High up in Heaven's highest heaven gleam;
And gazing at the splendours all around,
Should feel a perfect joy my soul enthrall,
To live for ever in that sinless land
Where holy God reigns calmly over all.

And welcomed by those lost belovèd ones
I parted with so long ago in tears,
Now glorified by perfect holy bliss
In that fair land where are no pains, no fears;
Where sorrow enters not, tears have no part,
And music rises in harmonious sound;
And God's great throne stands in its glory pure,
And God's own smile is radiant all around.

If I,—thus placed amid this heavenly host,
Amid all those that I have loved so well,—
Should gaze across the great black lake between,
And see thee burning in the depths of hell;—
Then,—(and the sacrifice were poor indeed,
For all may come to pass with our great love!)—
Then would I quit my glorious heavenly home
Amid those clouds of pearly light above.

And losing all, be joyful in the deed,
That, by a sole and willing act of mine,
I, placed with thee, in true and perfect faith,
Would cause to reign in hell a love divine.
For what were love, if love on earth were all?
And what were heaven deprived of love like thine?
For love on earth is sweet and fond indeed,
But God should crown it pure and all divine.

And even He, I think, when looking down,
Would gaze upon our perfect love in hell;
And shed for us a tear sublime and pure,
And murmur grandly: "It is well."
And so, I think, the burning fiery flames
Of godless hell would circle us in vain;
For heaven itself were hell bereft of thee,
And hell with thee, dear love, were free of pain.

A BURIED THOUGHT.

I HAD a thought,
An inmost thought—
It stung me oft to pain;
It haunted me by night and day,
I strove to drive it far away,
It always came again.

I said at last:
"Farewell, dead past,
I cannot bear this woe.
What have I done, in days gone by,
That this should curse me utterly?
It was not always so."

There was a time,—
A happy time,—
When hearts were blithe and gay,
And I was loved, and I loved well,
In happy days no harm befell,
Till sorrow came our way.

We loosed our hands,—
Our happy hands,—
There was a wrong in each.
We turned away our saddened eyes,
Mine dared no longer seek the skies,
My prayers could not reach.

And in my heart,—
My bruisèd heart,—
There dwelt a painful thought;
I woke up in the night to scream,
I often dreamt a dreadful dream
About that painful thought.

At last I cried:
"Would I had died
Ere this had come to me!
The fiendish one must claim his own,
This thought of mine is hellish grown,
It poisons inwardly."

Then in the night
There came a light,
That burned my very soul;
And in an agony of heart
I saw my painful thought depart,
With heaven for its goal.

I felt my heart,—
My empty heart,—
'Twas throbbing loud and fast;
I felt a coldness in the air,
I felt a blankness everywhere,
But all my pain was past.

And yet to-day,
Though I can pray,
And calmly pass my life;
Although I lift my tranquil eyes
At morn and evening to the skies,
My heart is full of strife.

Not the old pain,—
Not that again,—
Although our lives flow on;
My love still loves me as before,
And I requite him as of yore,
The painful thought is gone.

And oft at night
I see a light,
And clasp my empty heart;
And "Oh!" I cry, "sad thought, return!
Though all my being ache and burn,
I cannot live apart!"

"Alas!" I said,
"When I am dead,
And reach my heavenly host,
How shall I find it, and know it?
Will an angel come and show it,
The thought that I have lost?"

Naught but silence,—
Solemn silence!—
And my weary heart makes moan:
It is gone, my thought, for ever;
It will come back to me never,
I must live my life alone.

AFTERTIME.

IN aftertime, when recollection sweeps
A thousand half-dead fancies from their place,
And shows us, clearer than we saw before,
The altered heart, and here the altered face
Of those that we have held most dear to us;
What sudden rush of foolish tears will blind,
When thinking of some unforgotten day
When hopes were high, and clouds all silver-lined.

We think of some old song whose notes resound
Through all the tender music of our soul;
And as the tones vibrate, a startled cord,
Half strange, half painful, jangles through the whole.
As the old days go by in quick succession,
And we go through each phase of life again,
It seems to us the past was full of promise
Which turned to fruitless hours of doubt and pain.

Could we but live them through with our new knowledge,
Could we but love again as then we did,
Could we but call the old hopes back to us,
And watch the old dreams rise up to our bid:
So much there is that we would like to do,
So much there is that we would wish to say,

So many kisses we would wish to press
On lips from which last year we turned away.

How much there is that we would change to-day,
Grown wiser with the wisdom bought of tears!
And how we long to reinspire the hearts
That throbbed for us in long-forgotten years!
There was earnest love we did not cherish,
And pleading that we did not stay to heed;
There were depths we did not care to fathom,
And comfort that we thought we did not need.

There were tears that ended in a coldness,
And there were doubts that ended in "Good-bye,"
Scornful eyes that would not read our meaning,
And silence that closed round us utterly.
These things we think of in the aftertime
When all our yearning can but naught avail,
And though we sob and rave, we cannot wake
The buried love with any tortured wail.

Things done are done for ever: love or hate,
Or smiles or tears, must stand for ever fast.
The retrospect is sad, the future vague,
To those who live their whole lives in the past.

AN ALTERED HEART.

WE stood face to face in the darkness,
The woman I loved and I;
The moon crept out of a shrouding cloud,
And the night wind hurried by.

"Ah, God!" I cried, with a terrible cry;
"Must the end of all be this,
(The end of a love as strong as ours!)—
Just a smile, a sigh, a kiss?

"Oh, love!" I cried, in desperate pain,
"Is there nothing left to say?
Can nothing win back your altered heart
On some more fortunate day?"

The woman I loved looked in my face
With a look I did not know:
"All sweet things must end like this," she said,
"In the grave of long ago.

"I loved you well in the days gone by;
But what availeth it now?
What shall I say to my altered heart,
Which has changed, I know not how?

"Would I not say to my love, 'Come back,'
If aught depended on me?

But all is ended between us now,
  Whosever the fault may be.

"But when you think of me, say sometimes:
  'She loved me well for a space.
But time is fleeting, and love fades fast:
  Others may fill up her place.'"

The moon stole out of a passing cloud,
  The woman I loved stood still,
The wind swept past with a muttered curse,
  The river ran down the hill.

And I said: "All is over between us!
  The past must pay for my pain;
But oh! I would bear all hell's tortures
  To go through the past again!"

IN THE CROWD.

SWEET one, I will try to write a letter,
  To tell you all the depths of love to-night:
All my wildest hopes, my sad despondings,
  That fade away to nothing in day's light.

How and where I met you first. Ah, heaven!
  Will time efface that wonderful surprise,

When, gazing through a crowd of well-known faces,
I saw the shining of your grand blue eyes?

Your head thrown backward,—stately and serene,
With all its wealth of curling, golden hair,
A slow smile curving through your perfect lips,—
Would God I could have died, dear, then and there!

Then, through all the fevered days that followed,
How I haunted you at night from place to place,
Standing midst the throng that crowded round you,
And happy,—if I could but see your face!

Time passed on, and fate drew us together,
And all my madness calmed itself in peace;
To look into your eyes, and hold your hand,
Was all I lived for,—now, e'en that must cease.

For I am one who, with his own right hand,
Can strike the death-blow to his dearest dream,
And all that life holds best worth living for,
Of which you are the substance, and the queen.

You would not love me, that I knew full well;
I would not ask it of one so sweet and pure,
Whose life flows on in tranquil happy ways;
My only prayer is: "May that calm endure!"

Oh, love! I never thought that aught like this,—
This power of love could spring from my worn heart.
But this is my farewell; I dare not go
And kiss your hands e'en once before we part.

For reading this you know the last of me,
And where I go in all the coming years
You will not know; for I am dead to you.
I write these words, and blot them with my tears.

But in the aftertime,—when you have learnt
Things that you know not now in your pure youth,—
You will say one day: "I have known much love,
And listened many times to vows of truth;

"But love has proved a phantom,—truth untrue;
Still there was one who loved me years ago,—
Ah! that was love! and he was good and true!
He said: 'I love you, therefore I must go.'"

A RETROSPECT.

"LET me pause and think a moment, oh my darling!
Ere I turn for you the closed and mystic page
Where is written all the story of my girlhood,
With its depths of joy and pain which you shall gauge.

"Will you love me all the better for my sorrow?
Will you smile with me at all my childish joys?
Will you pause a moment when you see the tearstains
Shed for broken hearts,—at times for broken toys?

"Will you read the saddest lines that I have written,
Nor yet misjudge my passion and my pain?
Will you trace, at last, the downfall of my idol,
And the fading of the love that was in vain?

"Will you love me less that I have loved another
With a love that at the time was very strong?
Will you think that now I cannot do you justice?
Will you look on that past story as a wrong?

"Ah, my darling! in the days long since departed,
In the fever and the turmoil of my youth,
There was one who should have known me,—should have loved me,—
But he loved me not, and knew not of my truth.

"And I suffered!—See! I do not seek to hide it!
I suffered all the more that I was young,
Full of life, and full of health, yet full of heart-break!—
And oh! 'tis hard to smile when hearts are wrung!

"Do I cheat you inasmuch as I had given
In the long past years a love both strong and true?
But that love was driven back to me uncherished,
And I stored it in my heart of hearts,—for you!

"It has grown, dear, in the keeping. It has strengthened;
And I lay it now so humbly at your feet.
Will you take it? Will you guard it? Will you prize it,
And crown it as a gift divine and sweet?"

"Oh, my darling!" cried her lover's voice in answer,
"With the great and glorious treasure of your love,
We shall live as the high gods have lived before us,
In the state of their high happiness above.

"I have lived my life all through for this fulfilment;
I can see all past years crowned in this To-day;
Whilst the future shall unfold its mystic promise,
I am yours, and you are mine, sweet, come what may!"

AFTER LONG YEARS.

WHATEVER was talked of between us, oh love,
In the past ineffaceable years;
Whatever was dwelt upon, lightly or not,
Whatsoever our hopes or our fears;
I have pondered them over, time after time,
Till my heart's thoughts knew them too well;
The least sound of your voice, least touch of your hand,
In my soul's depths for ever must dwell.

Although all the trace of your footsteps is gone,
Trodden out by the hurrying feet
Of many who close round my life's trivial ways,
Whose windings your footsteps made sweet;
Still the trace of your presence is graved on my heart
With a clearness entirely its own,
And the years intervening between our last words
Efface not the years that have flown.

Whatever the faults that have held us apart,
Whatsoever the pain I have borne,
I have held you as blameless, and loved you the same,
Disregarding the world and its scorn.
But the wisdom of years is maturing my life,
And I see as I saw not before;
The calmness of reason transfigures the love
Full of passion and turmoil of yore.

I hold out my hand, now, in friendship and peace,
And the years of my pain fade afar;
But the fate of my life is not now in your hands,
Nor the power to make or to mar.
I bless you, and wish you all fortunate things
That a possible future may show;
The love of a woman more happy than I,
Which may set all your future aglow.

But I plead for that woman the fullness of love,
To crown and transfigure her life;
Ah, love her not lightly! ah, cause her no pain
In the days that shall call her your wife.
For love, dear, believe me, needs love in return;
If we miss it,—God pity our tears!
For the calm that comes after can make small amends
For the anguish and turmoil of years.

LOVE TOKENS.

SEE! I have laid it aside to-day,
The little golden chain;
I have put it away for ever,
I shall never wear it again.

And the ring,—well, the ring is broken;
The letters all are torn;
They were not worthy of keeping,
Only worthy of scorn.

For the rest,—it is no great matter,
The pain is over,—quite,—
Though I pity his frail dishonour,
His early fall in the fight.

For the chain? all its links are severed,
The ring is broke in twain,
And the sense of his unworthiness
Has blotted out the pain.

RESIGNATION.

PEACE, my poor heart, peace and resignation;
The worst is over,—all is done and said;
In all the fathomless world before us
There is nothing more left to fear or dread.

No bitterer winds can blow around us,
Than those which we know by their fearful blast;
The future can hold no depth of sorrow
That we have not plumbed in our bitter past.

Oh life! roll on, nor stay to calculate
How much of pleasure you can bring to me;
No matter, time was once, when every day
Spread out its glories o'er a summer sea.

And since that summer time is past and gone,
And winter here instead within my heart,
What matter that the coldness gains and hurts?
For I have had at least some happy part.

I have known, too, much sorrow. Learnt to say
"Farewell," and yet not die of sheer despair,
But live, and smile, though far beneath that smile
There lay an anguish I could scarcely bear.

And thus pass on, and take the daily tasks
Still calmly, leaving none undone. But pray
Aloud at night in bitter need for strength
To keep up bravely yet another day.

And dealing gently; doing all my best
(Though storms within would drive me almost mad),
Faulty, and foolish, it may be;—but still
What I considered best, and seeming glad.

So, by degrees, to pass from life to death,
And learn the secrets of a future vast,
Where peace must be, for naught can be in store
More sorrowful than that which we have past.

Then, peace, my heart, peace and resignation;
The worst is over,—all is done and said;
In all the fathomless world before us
There is nothing more left to fear or dread.

ONE WORD.

WRING hands, and part in silence,
Seek eyes, and pale with pain,
Without one word, or knowledge
That we may meet again.

Such is, perhaps, the greatest,
By far, of human grief,
When voiceless love is surging
And cannot gain relief.

One word, and all were altered,
And, smiling midst my tears,
The thoughts of future gladness
Would shine through coming years.

One kiss,—and pain of parting
Were numbed by glad surprise,
With your dear arms around me,
Your image in mine eyes!

Such words come all too rarely,
  Though longing to be heard;
And lives are turned to sorrow
  For one poor yearned-for word!

Perhaps if you who love me
  Could look down in my heart,
The silence would be broken,
  Just once,—before we part!

(*Set to music by Miss Minnie Cochrane.*)

VOGLIA'S RETURN.

NOT long ago I said good-bye
  Quite calmly to the past;
I fancied I could soon forget,
  And shut it out at last.

I thought so, but it could not be;
  I struggled, but in vain;
And so I opened wide her grave,
  And took her back again.

Voglia lay so white and cold
  Within her narrow tomb;
Or did the teardrops in her eyes
  Mislead me in the gloom?

I took her back, and felt again
  The maddening wild desire
Consume my heart and soul away,
  With its old fervid fire.

I took her back, and lived again
  The old tumultuous life;
The struggle between joy and pain,
  The passion and the strife.

Ah, Voglia! will you never die,
  And pass away to rest?
And must you always wake again
  This passion in my breast?—

This passion that is all in vain;
  This love that ought to die,
And yearnings that I strive and long
  To lay for ever by.

Her arms are close around my heart;
  I feel her laboured breath.
Together we shall pass through life,
  Together pass through death!

ANGEL'S WINGS.

HAS my life been so very happy
That I should be loth to die?
And am I so wedded to pleasure
That I should forget to sigh?

Is the thought of the bright Hereafter
And the light of the glorious skies
So far from my remembrance
To be hid from my happy eyes?

No! for there surges within me
A hopelessly vain desire,
Fairer than earth or heaven,
Stronger than steel or fire;

Oh, if the hand of my darling
Were lying here in mine!
Oh, if the eyes of my lost love
Into mine own did shine!

Alas! I hear in my fancy
The sound of heavenly strings,
And I see in the dusky twilight
The gleam of an angel's wings!

(*Set to music.*)

A QUESTION.

AND art thou now so proud? Thou wast not once so proud,
But down upon my shoulder laid thy lovely head,
And safe within my arms did lie and rest,
Poor arms! so empty now that thou hast fled.

And art thou now so cold? Thou wast not once so cold,
But close against my throbbing heart did lean thine own;
Thy face upturned to mine was passion-pale,
Thine eyes love-languid, that are now like stone.

And art thou now so wise? Thou wast not once so wise.
I think thy wisdom, child, befits thee not so well.
Let God and men be wise; but thou,—go by,
For love is heaven,—indifference is hell.

So proud, so cold, so wise!—So much, then, hast thou learnt,
In that sweet breathing-space 'twixt child- and woman-hood.
Would thou couldst teach me also to be wise,
To bear this pain, and murmur, "God is good."

And yet,—ah no!—the past upbraids me as I speak,
And twines, once more, her tender arms about my heart;
I look on thee to-day, poor child, with grief,
So vain will prove at last thy wiser part!

Too proud, my child, to love me? Then I fain must go.
And now so very cold, my warmth will naught avail;
Thy wisdom would but turn from me with scorn;
Thy changing heart might teach my own to fail.

Ah! lovely child, how loth I am to leave thee!
Unwilling, too, to bid my last bright dream farewell;
But must thou be so proud, so wise, so cold?
Dear, answer!—for this last I cannot tell!

WHEN.

WHEN the earth woke up in gladness
To welcome the rising sun,
And the woods were filled with music,
Now the silent night was done,
Didst thou think of me,
As I did of thee?

When the glare at noon was hottest,
And the fairy clouds on high
Melted away in the azure
That covered the sultry sky,
Didst thou think of me,
As I did of thee?

When the shadows lay so deeply
Beneath the acacia trees,
And I bared my throbbing temples
To the welcome evening breeze,
Didst thou think of me,
As I did of thee?

When the fragrant night closed round me
And I watched the stars' first gleam,
And the moon of languid beauty
All her glory on me stream,
Didst thou think of me,
As I did of thee?

(*Set to music by the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

MEDITATION.

WHEN God, in His all-perfect gentle life,
Bade us, in tender language, love each other,
Did He intend that mighty love to be
Devoted only, solely, to this world of bitter strife?

And did He wish that all-divine appeal
Of soul to soul, and life to life, and heart to heart,
To let us know what love shall be in heaven,
And that this self-same joy, grown stronger, shall be there our part?

Did He mean,—in sorrow for our blindness,—
For one short instant, through our wondrous love,
To let us catch a glimpse of that far heaven,
Where love so vast and great shall mean eternity above?

Or did He mean our hearts that beat so wildly,
And love so fondly, shall be stilled and crushed,
Our altered eyes filled with a holy glory,
Our yearning tender souls all sanctified and hushed?

Did He mean that he I love shall pass me by
With saint-like eyes, all passionless and mild?
Great God! it cannot be, for Thou art just,
And love on earth must end in love on high all undefiled.

I could not bear to see him pass me by,
And not to feel his fond arms flung round me,
To gaze in his dear eyes, and there to see
That holy heaven had destroyed our true love utterly.

How can they say it, they who think they know Thee,
That Thy fair heaven is a ceaseless psalm?
Where every throbbing soul shall thrill no more,
And even our great love itself shall grow all still and calm?

Oh, how can I answer, for I know not!
How dare I doubt that Thou hast done all well?
And yet,—it will not be, for Thy bright land
Would be no longer perfect heaven, dear God, but darkest hell!

HER GRAVE.

IT fell upon a day when she was dead,
And grasses waved above her lowly head,
That I went sadly, seeking her, and said:
"One lieth here I love, but she is dead."

I loved her not when she was warm with life,
And moved with too sweet feelings for this strife
Of foolish words and half intent; too pure
To use her peerless worth unworthily.

But I, I stood amongst men, and I thought
Not of her. Till one day when I sought

With tired eyes for my unsullied lily,
Behold! it was gone; dead, and stilly.

And now I am here by her grave. I see
Gay flowers bloom above her merrily,
And I would give the world to hear her say
The old soft words which I would heed to-day.

But she, too gentle for this world, too fond
To live unloved, my poet! sweet flowers wave
Like typical death-thoughts, the lily maid
Had sent to speak to me above her grave.

It seems to me they speak so well of her,
Like thoughts unuttered, hopes she did not say;
And I, who did not love her, love her now,
Could she but wake to me! Too late to-day!

OBLIVION.

TO stretch both hands out, and to find
No hand to clasp them. Cry aloud,
And hear no voice that answers us.
To stand alone amidst a crowd;
This is the end of love.

To sit apart with unshed tears,
  To watch the seasons come and go,
To still the cry and check the sob,
  To see old fears pass to and fro;
    This is the end of hope.

To shut the world out 'neath the grass,
  To leave the sorrow and the pain,
To lie with happy folded hands,
  To dream the old sweet dreams again;
    This is the end of life.

(*Set to music by the Earl of Kinnoull.*)

ANOTHER DREAM DISPELLED.

ANOTHER dream dispelled, my heart, my heart,
  Another high hope fallen faint and dead,
Another waking to the pain and smart
  Of sobs that catch the breath, and tears unshed.
A stretching forth of passionate fond arms,
  A cry of vain imploring,—vain regret,—
The shuddering knowledge that the worst hast come,
  The baleful knowledge that I love her yet.

Oh fool! oh blind! oh weak! poor heart of mine,
  Can I stand weeping here with fruitless pain,

When all is done for ever? Cast about
My tearful eyes to meet her gaze again;
To hang upon her pleasure, take with thanks
What trivial kindness she may choose to show
To-day; and hunger for the same next day,
Which she, in altered mood, deigns not bestow?

To be so poor and mean a thing as that!
I, whom men call a poet, and a man!
I, whom she stayed to smile upon, to love,
As well as such faint heartless women can!
And I, I dreamt that love when once uplit
Burned on for ever! True for one of us,
But for one only. She gave love, lit up
The fire; then let it fall to ashes,—thus.

But I, a strong sad man, who can but wake,
And rave, and curse, and weep, and cry to-night
Against all earthly love since hers has failed,
What can I do to drive away this blight?
Will it avail to curse her? Will her eyes
Cease lighting softly for the newest craze
Her fickle fancy seeks; or check, perchance,
The wanton folly of her passing days?

Will it avert the fate of those who fill
The enviable place that once was mine?
Or still the cravings of this yearning heart,
Or turn indifference to love divine?

No; all perplexèd meanings of our life
And passion-tossed reality must bow
Before the stern decree, "What must be,—is.
Thou hast been loved, and thou must sorrow now."

These things are balanced nicely. We should know
When we are happy, that the day must rise
When we shall moan, and sigh at fate, because
The tears are grown too heavy for our eyes.
All this is wisdom; but my dream dispelled,
My hope grown faint, my heavy heart, tears vain,—
These teach me nothing, for we cannot learn
Such things as these,—except at cost of pain.

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